

Meeting postponed after Qatar-Egypt row

RIYADH (AFP) — A meeting between the Gulf Arab states, Egypt and Syria scheduled to take place here on Dec. 1 has been called off because of a row between Cairo and Doha, a Gulf diplomat said Friday. Asking not to be named, he said the meeting of the eight countries — which were united in opposing Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait — was to be postponed until late December or early January. A war of words has broken out between Egypt and Qatar over Cairo's criticism of the MENA conference which Doha hosted this week. The forum was boycotted by most Arab countries because of Israel's participation. Qatar, which is grouped with Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in the Gulf Cooperation Council, has also accused Egypt of backing a failed coup there in February 1996.

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Iraq recognises Palestinian passport

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Iraq has recognised the Palestinian passport, the Palestinian news agency Wafa announced Thursday. The Palestinian National Authority's envoy to Baghdad, Azam Al Ahmad, received a letter from the Iraqi foreign ministry announcing that Baghdad now recognises the passport, Wafa said. "From now on, any Palestinian can go to Iraq with a passport issued by the Palestinian National Authority after getting an Iraqi visa," the agency quoted Mr. Ahmad as saying. Seventy other countries recognise the passport. Iraq, like Syria and Lebanon, refused to recognise the Palestinian passport as long as no Palestinian state was proclaimed.

UNSCOM team back at work; Aziz in Syria in first senior visit since '80s Iraq, U.S. claim victory

Combined agency dispatches

U.N. ARMS inspectors returned to Iraq on Friday, a week after the expulsion of U.S. experts, as Washington kept up the pressure by deploying a second aircraft carrier and Stealth fighters in the Gulf.

The team of 75 weapons experts working for the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of dismantling Iraq, including six U.S. nationals, flew in aboard a U.N. flight from Bahrain.

They were greeted with signs reading "Down with U.S." at Habbaniya airport, west of Baghdad, witnesses said. The team travelled to the capital by bus.

The UNSCOM team had been withdrawn to Bahrain a week earlier, leaving behind a skeleton staff at an arms monitoring centre, after Baghdad expelled the U.S. experts on Nov. 13.

Iraq reversed its decision on Thursday allowing all the inspectors back, in a deal with Russia which pledged to work toward a "rapid" lifting of sanctions.

Meanwhile, Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz arrived in Damascus Friday after talks with Egyptian officials, on the first visit to Syria by a senior Iraqi official since the early 1980s, officials at Cairo airport said.

"In this crisis, there was a clear Arab position rejecting any military action against Iraq, and we appreciate the Syrian leaders' position," Mr. Aziz told reporters.

Mr. Aziz added that he was "extremely happy to visit this brother country [Syria] in order to tell the leaders of our position and our vision" of the crisis.

Ties between Baghdad and Damascus, which took part in a U.S.-led coalition to evict Iraqi troops from Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf war, have improved since May. They have reopened their border after a closure of 15 years.

On Friday Mr. Aziz met Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa as U.N. arms inspectors resumed work in Baghdad.

"I hope this is the end of the crisis," Mr. Musa told reporters in a brief comment.

after meeting Mr. Aziz in a Cairo hotel in their second round of talks.

"There has been a clear decline in the crisis between Iraq and the United Nations after members of the Special Commission on Disarmament started returning," Mr. Musa said earlier.

"Implementation of the agreement between Russia, Iraq and the four powers which met in Geneva is very important so that things go back to their natural track as part of implementing U.N. resolutions in a rational way," he said.

He said Mr. Aziz had told him during their talks on Thursday of what the Iraqi official called "exaggeration and harassment" from the U.N. inspection teams charged with finding and destroying Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq's decision to lift its ban on the U.S. experts appeared to defuse a crisis which began on Oct. 29 with President Saddam Hussein's threat of expulsions but Washington is pressing ahead with plans to boost its air strike force in the region.

U.S. officials said the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier George Washington steamed into the Gulf overnight, while six radar-evading Stealth F-117 fighters touched down in Kuwait early Friday.

The U.S. has also ordered 36 combat planes and tankers to Bahrain and B-52 bombers to the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia.

Also being sent to Bahrain are Patriot missiles and launchers to make up a battery to defend against Scud missile attack, said Colonel Richard Bridges, a Pentagon spokesman.

U.S. officials said Iraq's air defences remained on a heightened state of alert in southern Iraq, posing a threat to U.S. fighters enforcing a "no-fly" zone in southern Iraq.

"The forces will stay as long as they are necessary to be there to make sure that our own forces are protected," U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen said.

The U.S. now has an armada of 23 naval ships in the Gulf, after the George Wash-

ington joined a second carrier, the Nimitz. Nine of the ships are capable of firing cruise missiles.

The deployments raise the U.S. troop strength to 27,000 soldiers.

On land, more than 300 combat aircraft will be operating from U.S. bases in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain while another 53 U.S. combat aircraft are stationed in Turkey.

U.S. President Bill Clinton, warning that the crisis was not over despite Iraq lifting its ban on American inspectors, has said he would "wait and see" if Baghdad allowed UNSCOM to work freely.

The hard line adopted by the U.S. and Britain has contrasted sharply with French and Russian calls that Iraq must be given an incentive to co-operate with UNSCOM.

"Our vision is that we must be able to say in a clear manner under what conditions and when the Iraqis will finally be able to come out of the tunnel," French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine said, referring to the embargo.

But U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Bill Richardson warned his country would use its veto "if necessary" to keep the sanctions in place until Iraq had complied with all U.N. resolutions and not just on disarmament.

Addressing an Iraqi concern as promised by Russia, U.N. disarmament experts were to meet in New York on Friday to weigh possible changes to U.N. inspection teams in Iraq.

In Baghdad, the official press on Friday hailed the accord with Russia as a victory over the U.S. and the prayer leader in the capital's largest mosque praised President Saddam as "a great strategist."

On Friday, Mr. Clinton also declared victory, calling the return of U.N. inspectors to Baghdad an "important achievement."

"It shows once again that determined diplomacy backed by the potential of force is the only way to deal with [Iraqi President] Saddam Hussein," President Clinton said during a White House ceremony.



One of UNSCOM's American inspectors walks past an anti-American slogan upon his arrival in Baghdad, Friday. U.N. arms inspectors, including Americans, arrived back in Iraq on Friday after an accord, which a Baghdad newspaper hailed 'as a great victory' appeared to put an end to the three-week-old crisis (Reuters photo)

Jordan hopes agreement will lead to lifting of sanctions

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian government has welcomed the agreement that ended the standoff between Iraq and the U.N.

Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi said on Thursday Jordan played an effective role in this matter through intensive talks that His Majesty King Hussein held in Washington and London in order to defuse the crisis through dialogue and quiet diplomacy.

Dr. Mutawi expressed hope that the return of the U.N. inspectors to Iraq

would serve as a prelude to a final settlement of the crisis, stressing that this step would expedite the mission of the U.N. inspection teams and subsequently lead to the lifting of sanctions and ending the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The minister stressed that Jordan has called on the international community to avoid the use of force and to exhaust all diplomatic efforts to settle this crisis and to give due consideration to the human suffering of the 20 million Iraqis.

Judaism's holiest site may be legally Muslim

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Judaism's holiest shrine, the Walling Wall, does not legally belong to the Jewish state, according to one lawyer and expert on Jerusalem's holy sites.

Shmuel Berkovits, in a research paper published by the private Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, said on Friday the wall is legally owned by the Islamic Waqf (trust), custodian of Muslim shrines overlooking the wall in Jerusalem's Old City.

Israel illegally occupied the Old City's Jewish quarter after seizing Arab east Jerusalem from Jordan in 1967 and expanded for worshippers the area around the wall.

"But the government decided not to expropriate the wall itself so as not to revive the battle over the rights to the wall," Mr. Berkovits told Reuters.

A struggle over the site erupted into violence in 1929 in then British-mandated Palestine, he said.

He said the government also feared that expropriating the

wall would be seen as relinquishing its claim to the nearby Temple Mount, once the site of Jewish temples and now home to the Al Aqsa Mosque.

"Another researcher found that though the government did not expropriate the wall, the map in the expropriation order included the base of the wall, measuring one metre in width and 140 metres in length, for Israel," he said.

Sheikh Ikrima Sabri, the mufti of Jerusalem, said the wall was part of the Al Aqsa Mosque compound.

"We don't recognise whether Israel confiscated it or not and it doesn't change the reality," he told Reuters. "An Islamic Waqf remains so until doomsday."

Mr. Berkovits said his findings would have little impact on future Israeli-Palestinian talks on Jerusalem's fate.

"Also, what is important to the Muslims is not the wall. The issue is east Jerusalem. The Muslims fear the Jews will try to rebuild the temple on the Temple Mount," he said.

King, Queen back home after visits to U.S., U.K. Monarch to attend OIC summit in Tehran next month — IRNA

AMMAN (J.T.) — Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor returned home Friday concluding a several-day visit to the United States and the United Kingdom, Jordan Television reported.

King Hussein underwent a minor surgery at Mayo Clinic after which he held talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton on issues of common concern, the Middle East peace process and the Iraqi-U.N. crisis.

While in London, the King had talks with senior British officials on the faltering peace process and means of overcoming obstacles hindering its progress.

Upon their arrival, Their Majesties were received at the airport by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, the King's personal representative, other Royal family members, Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Senate Speaker Zeid Rifai, Royal Court Chief and senior civil and military officials.

Meanwhile, AFP reported from Tehran that the King will attend the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit next month in Tehran in his first visit to Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The official Iranian News Agency, IRNA, said Thursday that the King's participation was mentioned in a meeting Thursday between the Iranian minister of culture and Islamic guidance, Ayatollah Mohajerani, and Jordanian Ambassador to Tehran Nuh Ali Salman.



King Hussein and Queen Noor prepare to leave from Heathrow Airport to Amman Friday (AFP photo)

Ayatollah Mohajerani was cited by the agency as saying that King Hussein's visit to Tehran is expected to begin a new chapter in Jordanian-Iranian relations.

Bilateral relations have been marred by Iran's hostility to the Arab-Israeli peace process. Iran opposes the existence of Israel which it says is an "illegitimate" state.

Jordan and Iran reestablished diplomatic ties in 1991, 10 years after they were severed as a result of Jordan's support for Iraq in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

Tehran hosts the Dec. 9-11 summit of the Jeddah, Saudi Arabia-based OIC, which it is presenting as a forum for the Islamic cause and venue of Islamic solidarity.

U.N. extends mandate of force in Golan Heights

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The U.N. Security Council decided Friday to extend for six months the mandate of the force monitoring the ceasefire between Israel and Syria in the Golan Heights.

The council unanimously adopted a resolution extending the mandate of the force, known as the

UNDOF, through May 31, 1998.

The mandate has been renewed every six months since the force was created May 31, 1974. Israel seized the Golan Heights in 1967 and annexed the land in 1981.

Syria has made a return of the Heights a precondition for any peace deal with Israel.

"The situation in the Middle East continues to be potentially dangerous and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached," council president Qin Huasun of China said.

Clinton calls on PNA, Israel to get back on peace track

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton warned the Palestinians and Israelis Friday against undermining the Mideast peace process and urged them to get the stalled talks back on track.

"In recent months, you have to acknowledge at least that the pace of change has slowed and that the bonds of trust have eroded on both sides," Mr. Clinton said at a White House ceremony.

The president was accepting an award from former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Leah Rabin, the widow of assassinated Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, for his work on the

Mideast peace process (see story on page 12).

But U.S. efforts, launched at the Madrid conference in October 1991, have been frustrated by Israel's construction of new settlements and Palestinian demands for a "land-for-peace" deal.

Mr. Clinton took a veiled swipe at both sides.

"Israelis and Palestinians must embrace the spirit at the heart of the Oslo accords, not jockeying for advantage but working together for the benefit of both sides," he said.

"Both sides must refrain from actions that undermine the joint pledge they

have made to strengthen security," he said.

The award from the Peres-Rabin Foundation, which funds scholarships for young Americans to study in Israel, names Mr. Clinton as the first recipient of the Man of Peace Award.

Mr. Clinton cited the massacre of tourists in Egypt this week and the standoff over Iraqi weapons and stressed the immediate need to reach a peaceful resolution to the hostilities in the Middle East.

"Now both sides have got to realise the need for urgency. The window of progress will become smaller with time," he said.



ALL FOR THE RESISTANCE: An activist of the 'Lebanese Brigades for the Resistance Against the Israeli Occupation' distribute Lebanese flags, inscribed with 'all for the resistance', on a main street in Beirut on the eve of the Lebanese independence day. The non-confessional brigades were set up this month by the Iranian-backed Hizbullah, which spearheads a guerrilla war against Israel in south Lebanon (AFP photo)

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Michael Jackson will
not hold concert in
Hong Kong

Jewish shooting victim buried as police point to Palestinian police

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Thousands of people attended the funeral Friday of a Jewish militant killed in an ambush in Jerusalem's Old City as police charged that the automatic weapon used in the attack may have come from Palestinian security forces.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert and several ministers from the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu led mourners in a long funeral procession and ceremony for Gabriel Hirschberg, 26, killed early Thursday.

Hirschberg was walking through the Muslim quarter of the Old City shortly after midnight with a fellow student from a right-wing religious seminary when the pair were attacked by one or more gunmen hiding behind a wall.

Benjamin Dil, 18, was seriously wounded but managed to run to a police outpost 100 metres away.

Mr. Olmert, a leading member of Mr. Netanyahu's Likud Party, told mourners that the

shooting should encourage Jews "to expand their presence throughout Jerusalem" — including the Arab eastern sector occupied by Israel since 1967.

"We will continue to people this country and this city, which are holy for us," added Israel Meir Lau, the chief Ashkenazi rabbi of Israel.

Hirschberg and Mr. Dil were both members of Ateret Cohanim, a militant group dedicated to building Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem. They were ambushed while walking between an Ateret Cohanim religious school in the Muslim quarter and a nearby dormitory run by the group.

Mr. Netanyahu said the use of an automatic weapon to attack Jews in the Old City was "unprecedented and unacceptable." The killing cast a shadow over renewed U.S. efforts to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations after months of crisis.

No group claimed responsibility for the attack and while police arrested several Palestinian suspects for questioning, they said there

were no real leads in identifying the assailants.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, police officials said they suspected the Kalashnikov assault rifle used in the attack came from weapons stocks held by the security forces of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Palestinian police are equipped with Kalashnikovs, although a police investigator told AFP the bullets recovered from Thursday's attack were not from the model of the weapon most widely used by the PNA.

He said however that the Palestinian police had many different models of Kalashnikovs and may have provided one to the assailants or even carried out Thursday's attack themselves.

The weapons are also fairly easy to procure on the black market in the Palestinian territories, they said. Suspicion also fell on Palestinian groups opposed to the PNA and its peace agreements with Israel.

Foremost among these is the Islamic Resistance

Movement (Hamas), which has killed scores of Israelis, mostly in suicide bombings, since the first peace accords were signed in 1993.

The Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine was also a suspect, police said. The left-wing movement has used Kalashnikovs in a number of attacks on settlers in the West Bank.

Mr. Olmert has held the PNA responsible for Thursday's attack, saying it had ignored its obligation under the peace accords to root out violent militants.

Palestinians noted however that Israel forbids Palestinian police to operate in Arab east Jerusalem where the attack occurred.

Israel claim that the Arab sector of the city is part of its capital. The Palestinians want Arab east Jerusalem as the capital of a future state. Israel is committed under the Oslo interim peace accords to negotiate the final status of Jerusalem, although it rejects any redrawing of the city.



PRO-IRAQ DEMONSTRATION: Women and children chant slogans against the United States during a demonstration in solidarity with the Iraqi people in Amman Thursday. The Kingdom's Islamist-dominated opposition on Thursday lambasted Washington for "criminal policies" against the Iraqi people and urged Arab governments to float U.N. sanctions on Baghdad (Reuters photo)

Turkey hails Iraq-U.N. rapprochement

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey on Friday welcomed reduced tensions between Iraq and the United Nations following Baghdad's move to accept the return of all U.N. experts to the country to continue weapons inspections.

"Turkey welcomes the latest developments resulting in the return of all U.N. experts to Baghdad," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

"From the beginning, Turkey has been supporting a peaceful solution to the crisis through Iraq's compliance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions," it said.

The Iraqi announcement Thursday to allow the U.S. experts in the U.N. team back appeared to defuse the crisis that began on Oct. 29 with Baghdad's threat of expulsions.

The Iraqi move followed a meeting of the foreign ministers of the U.N. Security Council's five permanent members in Geneva, calling for Iraq to step back.

Turkey hosts an allied airbase in the country's south that was extensively used by a U.S.-led multinational air force during and after the 1991 Gulf war.

Turkish officials expressed reluctance to allow the U.S. to use the Incirlik base for potential offensive missions against Iraq.

Turkey, which says it has lost more than \$30 billion in severed trade ties with Iraq since 1991, calls for the lifting of a U.N. embargo imposed on Baghdad following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Bahrain, U.A.E. praise Russian diplomacy

On Thursday, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) welcomed Russia's efforts to defuse the crisis

between Iraq and the United Nations and avoid a military strike.

"Bahrain is pleased with the successful diplomatic efforts which have defused the crisis... and welcomes the return of the disarmament experts to Iraq," the Bahraini foreign ministry said in a statement carried by the Gulf News Agency (GNA).

The UAE foreign ministry, in a statement published by the WAM news agency, stressed that "the success of the diplomatic efforts spared the region from a new military confrontation and more suffering for the Iraqi people."

Iran accuses Israel of spying near its borders

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has accused Israel of deploying listening devices in Turkey near the Iranian and Syrian borders, Iran's official IRNA news agency said Friday.

Revolutionary Guards' Commander General Rahim Safavi also accused Turkey of "paving the way for the presence of Israeli and American forces in northern Iraq under the pretext of cracking down on the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)," an Iraqi Kurdish faction fighting a pro-Ankara rival Kurdish group in the region.

"Israeli experts under the excuse of controlling the PKK (Kurdish Labour Party) have placed listening devices on the borders with Iran and Syria," he said, referring to a Turkish Kurd rebel group with bases in northern Iraq. Both Iran and Syria have been very critical of recent military co-operation between Turkey and Israel and deem it a threat to their national security.

Iran has also criticised Turkey's past military incursions into northern Iraq to pursue PKK rebels, who are fighting for autonomy or a separate homeland in south-eastern Turkey.

Israeli warplanes blast Lebanese resistance bases

NABATIYEH (AP) — Israeli warplanes blasted suspected resistance bases in south Lebanon Thursday.

Two hours later the same resistance group ambushed a patrol of the Israeli-backed South Lebanese Army (SLA), wounding four militiamen, Lebanese security officials said.

Two Israeli fighter jets fired two missiles at resistance positions near Aqmat, a village in Iqlim Al Tuffah province facing the Israeli-occupied buffer zone in south Lebanon. Lebanese security officials said on customary condition of anonymity.

In Tel Aviv, an Israeli military spokesman confirmed the air strike, saying the pilots reported "accurate hits" on targets of the Hizbollah group in Iqlim Al Tuffah.

There was no word on casualties from the 3:35 p.m. local time air raid, the second such attack on Aqmat in four days. There were no casualties in Monday's strike on Aqmat.

Hizbollah has many bases in Iqlim Al Tuffah, which it uses as a springboard for attacks on Israeli troops and the SLA militia in the Israeli-occupied zone.

Later Thursday, Hizbollah guerrillas detonated a roadside bomb as an SLA vehicle was driving along a road near Taibeh village in the central sector of the buffer zone. Security officials said.

Four SLA members were wounded in the blast, the officials said.

The ambush was not necessarily linked to the air strike as Hizbollah routinely deto-

nates roadside bombs under SLA and Israeli vehicles.

In Beirut, Hizbollah claimed responsibility for the bombing, saying their guerrillas had also launched rocket and machine-gun attacks on Israeli troops and SLA militiamen in the occupied zone, scoring "direct hits."

Israeli and SLA artillery guns responded to the bomb attack by bombarding suspected guerrilla hideouts in villages facing the zone. No casualties were reported.

Hizbollah is the most active of Lebanese guerrilla groups fighting to oust some 1,500 Israeli soldiers and the 2,500 SLA militiamen from south Lebanon. Israel established the self-declared security zone in 1985 to try to shield its northern towns from cross-border guerrilla attacks.

KHARTOUM (AFP) — Sudan says Uganda, often accused of backing southern rebels opposed to domination by the Islamist-backed junta, is planning to invade the country, a newspaper reported Friday.

Sudanese officials cited what they said was a shift of the Ugandan army command from Kampala to Gulu in northern Uganda, the daily Al

Rai Al Akher said. It quoted Rick Machar, assistant president and south Sudan coordination council chairman, and Arok Thon Arok of the pro-government United Democratic Salvation Front, as saying they expect Ugandan military operations against south Sudan.

Mr. Machar described the reported moving of the Ugandan army operations com-

mand as "a grave step."

Sudan regularly accuses Uganda of backing a southern rebel group, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Uganda accuses Sudan of giving at least three Ugandan rebel groups arms and a safe haven. Both countries deny the charges.

Mr. Machar headed a breakaway faction from the mainstream SPLA and has been

among former allies of rebel leader Colonel John Garang to cut a peace deal with the junta this year.

The SPLA and Khartoum have, meanwhile, held talks this month and plan to meet again next year, but are still far from seeing eye-to-eye on a settlement of a 14-year conflict which has directly or indirectly claimed around a million lives.

Lone Palestinian minister working in Jerusalem

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Palestinian Religious Affairs Minister Hassan Tahboub considers himself a lucky man — he is the only member of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) who is allowed to work openly in Jerusalem.

While the Israeli government works feverishly to prevent any sign of encroachment by the PNA into occupied Jerusalem, Mr. Tahboub, 73, calmly pursues his functions from a handsome office adjacent to the Al Aqsa Mosque compound of Arab east Jerusalem's Old City.

"I'm here every day of the week doing my job both as minister and as head of the High Islamic Commis-

sion," he said in an interview. "Of course I'm very lucky. I'm very happy and satisfied to be here," he said.

In the tensely complicated world of religious politics in the Holy City, it is Mr. Tahboub's position as head of the High Islamic Committee which allows him to ignore an Israeli ban on activity in Jerusalem by PNA officials.

According to Israel, the Oslo interim peace accords which created the PNA and gave it control of parts of the Gaza Strip and West Bank does

not allow for any official Palestinian role in Jerusalem. The future of the city, and Palestinian claims that east Jerusalem should be the capital of a future Palestinian state, were put off to future negotiations on a final peace agreement between the two sides.

Mr. Tahboub was one of the founders of the high committee with other Muslim dignitaries 30 years ago when Israel occupied east Jerusalem in 1967.

At the time, their aim was to prevent any Israeli meddling in Muslim affairs or the running of the Al Aqsa

Mosque compound. Mr. Tahboub hardly imagined that three decades later he would be able to use his office to carry out ministerial tasks.

But today he receives visitors and carries out his correspondence in the committee's domed, 750-year-old building, the top floor of which is ironically occupied by Jewish settlers.

His aides in the religious affairs ministry, however, must work in another location, Bethany, a suburb of Arab east Jerusalem which lies

outside the Israeli-set municipal boundaries.

As religious affairs minister, Mr. Tahboub oversees the Waqf, the organisation which administers Muslim properties... except inside Jerusalem.

Under rules established in 1967, the Jerusalem Waqf is run by the committee's Jordanian counterpart, although this has effectively been taken over by the Palestinians since the creation in 1994 of the PNA.

President Yasser Arafat last year named a new mufti, or religious

chief, for Jerusalem, Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, eclipsing the mufti named by Jordan.

Israel has decided to close its eyes to Mr. Tahboub's double function in Jerusalem in an apparent effort to avoid fanning religious conflict which is never far below the surface in Jerusalem.

"I've never been bothered directly by the Israelis, though I have noticed some Israeli officials making critical comments about me," he said.

Since the start of Palestinian autonomy, Israel has focused its attention on trying to prevent Palestinian police activities in Jerusalem and on reining in Orient House.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10Twinkle
14:30Muppet Show
15:00Pumpkin Patch
15:15World of Geo
16:00The Valley Between
16:30Neighbours
17:00French programmes
19:00Le Journal
19:30News headlines
20:00The Newly Weds
20:30Prism
21:10Time Trax
22:00News in English
22:30 Feature film: "Double Impact"
23:59Ellen

PRAYER TIMES

04:45Fajr
06:05(Sunrise) Duha
11:22Dhuhr
14:14Asr
16:38Maghreb
17:59Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
63785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661656.
Terra Sancta Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

622366
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 62826.
Armenian Catholic Church
Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel.
771751.
Arman International Church
Tel. 5516245
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824528.
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.
Church of Nazarene Tel.
675691.
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Sunny to partly cloudy weather conditions will prevail during the day becoming cool at night. There will be a chance of scattered showers in the northern

parts of the Kingdom and winds northeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp.,
Amman08/20
Aqaba07/21
Deserts07/21
Jordan Valley14/26

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 21 Aqaba 26 Humidity
readings: Amman 42 per cent.
Aqaba 33 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Wissam Hazyin748563
Dr. Mukhlis Mazahrah 820425
Dr. Munther Al Qatani 779959
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayim620115
Firas pharmacy661912
Ferdows pharmacy778336
Al Asema pharmacy637055
Nairookh pharmacy623672
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660

Najib pharmacy847632
IRBID:
Dr. Fawzi Abul Hajja252970
Al Quds pharmacy(—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Salah Salfarini987565
Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Rescue Police 192. 621111.
637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Department630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs775111/26
661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
Jordan Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Company636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn644281/6
Aklieh Maternity, J. Amn642411/2
Jabal Amman Maternity642362
Malhas, J. Amman636140
Palestine Shmeisani607071
Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Mousher Hospital667277/9
The Islamic, Abdali (666) 26/57
Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6
Italian, Al-Mohajreen777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh

775111/26
Army, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital09983323
Zarqa National Hospital09900560
Ibn Sina Hospital09986732
Al Hikam Modern Hospital09990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital02127555
Greek Catholic Hospital02127275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital021247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital031314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information

on other flights is obtained on telephone (08) 52700 or (08) 523250.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:00Jeddah (add) (RJ)
08:10Aqaba (add) (RJ)
08:25Damascus (RJ)
09:30New Delhi (RJ)
09:55Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
10:05Beirut (RJ)
10:20Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
10:30Colombo (RJ)
15:00New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:20Cairo (RJ)
17:40London, Berlin (RJ)
18:55Kuala Lumpur (add) (RJ)
21:45Kuala Lumpur, Frankfurt (add) (RJ)
05:15Bangkok (RJ)
Other Flights
09:30Al 'Arish (PF)
13:15Riyadh (SV)
15:05Vienna (OS)
18:00Dubai, Damascus (EK)
21:10Paris, Damascus (AF)
21:15London (BA)
22:30Athens (OA)
22:35Cairo (MS)
23:30London, Beirut (BA)
23:35Amsterdam (KL)
23:45Beirut (ME)

03:25Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW)

(No flights on Saturday)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:45Aqaba (add) (RJ)
06:45Beirut (RJ)
10:15Kuala Lumpur, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00Geneva, Brussels (RJ)
12:00Aqaba, Brussels (RJ)
12:10Paris (RJ)
12:15London (RJ)
12:30Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:30Cairo (RJ)
20:05Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
20:15Bombay (RJ)
20:20Lamaca (RJ)
20:30Jeddah (RJ)
21:00Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
Other Flights
07:00Beirut (ME)
10:30Al 'Arish (PF)
14:15Abu Dhabi, Bahrain (GF)
14:45Riyadh (SV)
15:50Vienna (OS)
19:00Dubai (EK)
23:35Damascus, Paris (AF)
00:35Amsterdam (KL)
03:00Athens (AZ)
04:20Rome (OA)
06:15Beirut (ME)
06:40Beirut, London (BA)
Royal Wings (RW)
(No flights on Saturday)



PRINCESS DISTRIBUTES AWARDS: Her Royal Highness Princess Aisha Friday presents a trophy to one of 280 winners of the Children of Amman Association's (CAA) soccer tournament for 1997. A total of 20 children's clubs took part in the tournament. The CAA president, Lana Bataineh, thanked Princess Aisha for her patronage of the tournament's closing ceremony (Photo by Yousef Allam)

European Commission reviews energy cooperation with Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — In talks with a visiting representative of the European Commission's (EC) directorate general for energy, Jordan has insisted on the need for technical assistance, training, and development of private investments in the energy sector, the EU office in Jordan said in a press release.

The mission to Jordan, carried out by Jean-Luc Bernard from Nov. 18-20, falls within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Energy Forum, which was launched in June 1996 at the Trieste ministerial conference on energy. This conference prepared the way and provided a flexible framework for future development of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the field of energy, according to the press release.

The primary aim of the mission was to review ongoing preparations for the second Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Energy Ministers, which will take place in Brussels in May 1998 to adopt a mid-term action plan for the Euro-Mediterranean Energy Forum, the press release said.

Mr. Bernard described his talks here as having provided the EC with "fruitful input for bilateral and regional energy cooperation, and for the preparation of the action plan."

The Jordanian side, he added, put great emphasis on the further development of regional electricity interconnection.

Mr. Bernard met with senior officials from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Natural Resources Authority, National Electric Power Company, the Arab Union of Producers, Transporters, and Distributors of Electricity, Jordan Petroleum Refinery Company, and the Royal Scientific Society, the press release concluded.

12th Italian Film Week opens today at University of Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — Under the patronage of HRH Princess Majda, the 12th Italian Film Week in Jordan is scheduled to open today at Samir Rifa'i Auditorium at the University of Jordan.

Six different films, all in Italian with English subtitles, will be shown, including "Buon Natale, Buon Anno" (Merry Christmas, Happy New Year), "Lo specchio delle meraviglie" (Through the Wonder Glass), "La Bionda (The Blonde)," "L'amico immaginario" (The Imaginary Friend), "Piccoli orrori" (Little Horrors), and "Trafflu da un raggio di sole" (Pierced by a ray of sunlight).

The Italian film week, organized this year by the Italian embassy and the University of Jordan, falls within a cultural programme between Jordan and Italy and "is a further reflection of the continuing and deep relationship" between the two countries, according to Italian ambassador Francesco Cerulli.

All films will be shown twice, at 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. the following day. Tickets are JD1 for general admission and 500 fils for students. All proceeds will go to Al Hussein Society for the Rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped.



FUND-RAISING MARCH: Deputising for Her Royal Highness Princess Rahma, Ministry of Education Secretary General Izzat Jaradat (centre) leads a march to raise funds to help poor families. The march was organised by the National Orthodox School to mark His Majesty King Hussein's 62nd birthday (Petra photo)

TWELFTH ITALIAN FILM WEEK

* "Buon Natale, Buon Anno" (with subtitles in English) at Samir Rifa'i Auditorium, University of Jordan at 8:00 p.m.

FILM

* Comedy: "Schulz and Schulz" (Pt. III) at Goethe-Institut, Amman at 4:30 p.m.

FIFTH JORDANIAN THEATRE FESTIVAL

* Two plays entitled "The House of Grief" and "The Last Tale of Shahrazad" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. respectively.

WHAT'S GOING ON

LECTURE

* "The Interaction Between Poetry, Calligraphy and the Graphic Art" (in Arabic) by Algerian artist Rashid Koraishi at Darat Al Funun, Jabel Weibdeh at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Paintings by Sandi Al-Knabi at Orient Gallery (Tel. 681303/4), until Dec. 4.
* Exhibitions of prints by Algerian artist Rashid Koraishi and calligraphy by Iraqi artist Hassan Mas'oudi at Darat Al Funun, Jabel Weibdeh until Dec. 4.

31. Also displaying paintings by Jordanian artist Naser Abdul Aziz and works by contemporary Arab artists.

* "Portrait '97" — works by over thirty Arab artists at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Utheina, until Nov. 30.
* Works by Khalid Khreis at Instituto Cervantes, Jabel Amman, until Dec. 10.
* Exhibition of wallhangings and weavings by Basheer Khatem and others at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Sagra Street (Tel. 699131/2) until Dec. 4.

* Paintings by Bahija Al Hakim at Hammurabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Nov. 22.
* "Journey Within" by Pakistani artist Gulgee and his son, sculptor Amin Gulgee, at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (Tel. 630128), until Dec. 15.
* Works by Syrian artist Khaled Al Maz at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Nov. 22.
* Bani Hamida fall exhibition "Encounter" (displaying rugs designed by Japanese textile designer Tomoko Iyoda) at Bani Hamida House, Jabel Amman, until Nov. 25 (Tel. 658696/7).
* Exhibition of wicker accessories from Wadi Rayan, handicrafts and gift items at the Jordan Rivers Designs showroom (Tel. 613081), until Nov. 23.

Higher court hands down temporary decision allowing editor to continue work

AMMAN (Petra) — The Higher Court of Justice has not yet handed down a final ruling in the case of the Arabic daily Al Arab Al Yawm. Editor-in-Chief Taher Adwan but has taken a temporary decision allowing the editor to continue work in implementation of Article 20 of the court's law, according to Press and Publications Department (PPD) Director Bilal Tal Friday.

Under the article, the newspaper and its editor have agreed to submit a financial guarantee of JD5,000 to the office of the notary public to cover any damage that might be inflicted on the PPD should the court rule against the editor and the daily paper.

The PPD had demanded that Mr. Adwan be replaced on the basis of Article 13 of the amendments introduced last May to the PPD law, which requires that editors-in-chief have at least ten uninterrupted years of experience in journalism.

The paper had petitioned the court to annul the PPD's decision, arguing that Mr. Adwan's credentials were approved by the government even after the amendments were introduced, and as such the PPD's decision contradicted that which was taken in June under the same circumstances.

The court last Tuesday postponed the implementation of the PPD's order for Mr. Adwan's replacement pending the outcome of the trial.

In his statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Mr. Tal said "we are applying the law and we remain committed to it and accept the judiciary's decision as our frame of reference. We are therefore awaiting the ruling of the Higher Court of Justice in this case."

It was not known whether a date has been set for hearing the lawsuit that Al Arab Al Yawm has filed against the PPD's decision to replace Mr. Adwan.

Another requirement of the PPD's law, which required weekly papers to raise their capital to JD300,000 by August 15, resulted in the suspension of 13 weeklies.

Minister returns from Haj preparations in Saudi Arabia

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi returned home Friday after a three-day visit to Saudi Arabia, during which he held talks with his Saudi counterpart and signed minutes of a protocol organising arrangements for next year's Haj (pilgrimage) season.

In a statement on his arrival, Dr. Abbadi said the minutes covered such issues as the number of Jordanian pilgrims who can make the pilgrimage to Mecca in April next year, pilgrims' residence in Mecca and Medina, transportation and other fees, and regulations organising the work of administrative, medical, and guidance teams accompanying pilgrims.

Dr. Abbadi added that under the agreement, Jordanian pilgrim caravans will leave for Saudi Arabia over a period of several days, starting earlier than 25 Thul Q'adah, the 11th lunar month, at least two weeks before the Haj, to avoid overcrowding at Hail Amman at the Saudi border.

He pointed out that extra empty buses and mobile mechanical workshops will accompany the pilgrims, at the rate of one empty bus and one workshop per caravan.

Under the agreement, a maximum of 500 members of the Jordanian pilgrimage teams, transport contractors, and drivers, in addition to 60 mechanics and electricians accompanying the Haj caravans will be exempted from the fees of circumambulation of the Kaaba (part of the Islamic pilgrimage ceremonies).

Dr. Abbadi said the Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Council tomorrow will announce the criteria for selecting pilgrims for the next Haj season as well as costs of pilgrimage, including travel by land or air, residence, and any other fees and charges they might be requested to pay.

Visiting Yugoslav delegation signs protocol on cooperation with labour union federation

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A seven-member delegation from the Federation of Labour Unions in Yugoslavia will leave for home today after the conclusion of a visit that included the signing of a protocol on cooperation in labour-related fields with the Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions (FJLU) Thursday.

At the signing ceremony, Dragan Radolovic, head of the Yugoslav delegation, expressed hope that the protocol will enhance Jordanian-Yugoslav relations.

He commended Jordan for sending troops to work under the auspices of the U.N. to keep and monitor the peace in Yugoslavia during the conflict there and expressed appreciation for the services rendered by the Jordanian forces to the Yugoslav people.

The protocol provides for the two sides to promote their cultural, educational, economic, and other forms of cooperation and to exchange publications and visiting representatives.

The protocol calls for the two sides to collaborate in organising joint training courses for their respective members, offer scholarships at academic and technical institutions in Jordan and Yugoslavia, and cooperate in efforts for enhancing world peace and stability, respecting human rights, and protecting the rights of workers.

Both parties expressed their belief in the possibility of solving all world issues through peaceful means and their opposition to all forms of extremism, terrorism, and racial discrimination.

The protocol voiced the signatories' commitment to working for peace, economic and social development, and protection of workers' rights and freedom for workers' unions.

FJLU Secretary General Khaled Shreim, who signed the protocol with the Yugoslav delegation leader, delivered an address praising the relations between Yugoslavia and Jordan and expressing Jordan's desire for continued collaboration to promote bilateral cooperation in labour-related fields.

Opposition holds sit-in to protest military action against Iraq, urge lifting of sanctions

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Representatives of opposition groups Thursday held a sit-in to protest the threats by the U.S. to use military action against Iraq to resolve the arms inspection stand-off and urged Arab states to lift the seven-year-old sanctions against the Iraqi people.

The participants in the two-hour sit-in, which was held in the Professional Associations Complex under heavy security arrangements that included the presence of police, dispersed peacefully following several speeches by representatives of political movements, independent personalities, and heads of professional unions.

More than two hundred participants took part in the protest, which was held in lieu of a planned procession in the heart of Amman that did not receive authorisation.

The participants carried placards that read "Down with U.S. aggression against Iraq," "The U.S. is our enemy," "Lift the sanctions," and "We will never accept Arab states being turned into detention camps."

Abdul Majeed Thneibat, head of the Muslim Brotherhood, called upon Arab governments to lift the U.S.-spearheaded sanctions, which were imposed following Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

"The time has come to lift the sanctions. We have to free ourselves from the American master. The sanctions are sins that will be redeemed only through a unified Arab action towards lifting the embargo against Iraq," he said.

Chairman of the Professional Unions Council, Hussein Mjalli, warned that failure by Arab regimes to lift the sanctions will draw a strong reaction from the Arab masses.

"The hands of the masses will slap you [Arab regimes] if the embargo continues against Iraq," said Mr. Mjalli, who is also head of the Bar Association.

"Arab countries should not implement U.N. resolutions against Iraq unless [U.N.] resolutions related to Israel are implemented," Mr. Mjalli added, referring to Resolutions 242, 338, 181, and others that Israel has refused to implement.

"Arabs are one people living in one nation and facing one enemy, namely Israel and the U.S.," he said. "The U.S. is the tool of Israel to implement its plans in the Arab World," Mr. Mjalli added.

Rizq Batayneh, a lawyer by profession and representative of the independent personalities, called for the 22-member Arab League to hold a summit to discuss the crisis between Iraq and the U.S.

Mr. Batayneh urged Arab states to remove border barriers and allow goods to reach the Iraqi market without prior conditions.

Fou'ad Dabour, secretary general of the Progressive Ba'ath Party, said it is not acceptable to punish Iraq while "the U.S. turns a deaf ear to Turkish incursions in northern Iraq, which are totally against the sovereignty of Iraq."

Work on Wadi Haddadeh-downtown tunnel complete; opening expected next week

AMMAN (J.T.) — Work on the 188-metre-long Wadi Haddadeh-downtown tunnel was completed Thursday but the official opening will take place early next week as part of the Kingdom's celebrations of His Majesty King Hussein's 62nd birthday, according to Amman Mayor Mammad Abbadi.

In a statement to the local press, Dr. Abbadi said work on the JD3.5 million project took only 180 days, down from the projected 350 days.

"It was a dream for the Amman municipality to finish this job and reduce the chronic traffic congestion problem in the downtown area," the mayor said.

The tunnel was co-designed by a local company and a firm from New Zealand, excavation was carried out by an Italian company, and local municipality authorities supervised the construction work, according to the municipality's project manager Amr Gharibeh.

He said construction crews worked around the clock to finish the project, which entailed the construction of a one-level intersection and a traffic light located at Wadi Haddadeh, a 188-metre-long tunnel with a pedestrian walkway 2.4 metres in width, and a concrete bridge at King Hussein Street that is 25 metres long and nine metres wide.

Dr. Abbadi said the tunnel will enable vehicles approaching the capital from the east and heading towards the Abdali district to avoid the city centre, as the case is now, and vice versa, thus greatly reducing the present traffic congestion in the heart of the capital.



Workers put the finishing touches on the new Wadi Haddadeh-downtown tunnel. The JD3.5 million tunnel will open next week as part of the Kingdom's celebrations of King Hussein's birthday (Al Dustour photo)

German CSU aims for united front at party congress

MUNICH, Germany (R) — Germany's Christian Social Union (CSU), Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Bavarian ally, gathered for a party congress Friday determined to reaffirm a tough stance on the euro and put summer squabbles behind them.

Facing a Bavarian state election as well as a general election next autumn, the arch-conservative party knows it has to walk a tightrope between showing solidarity with Mr. Kohl and avoiding the impression of slavish devotion.

Theo Waigel, the CSU party chairman and German finance minister, angered Mr. Kohl over the summer by demanding, in vain, a cabinet reshuffle and saying he wanted to quit his job at the ministry after the general election next September.

And Bavarian Prime Minister Edmund Stoiber, a leading CSU member and Germany's most vocal Eurosceptic, browbeat Mr.

Kohl into accepting that no leeway be given to countries seeking to qualify for European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).

Chastened by a slide in opinion polls for the coalition in recent months following the collapse of Bonn's plans for tax reform, the CSU is expected to bury the hatchet with its larger sister party, Mr. Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU).

"The congress will be a harmonious affair," one CSU member said this week. The party runs the Bavarian state government and forms part of Mr. Kohl's ruling centre-right coalition in Bonn.

The mood of reconciliation between CDU and CSU was evident in Mr. Kohl's appointment this week of a Waigel portage. CSU member Eduard Oswald, as construction minister in what is expected to be the last cabinet change before the general

election.

Mr. Waigel last month won a standing ovation at the CDU's party congress. And Mr. Stoiber has given him a boost by deciding not to stand against him for the CSU leadership.

Mr. Kohl was believed to have been concerned that Stoiber might seek to abolish the current grouping of the CSU and CDU in the federal parliament to allow the CSU to vote its own way.

Mr. Waigel is expected to be reelected at the two-day congress.

"The CSU won't dole out punishment at the congress — the party is more subtle than that," said Alois Glueck, head of the CSU parliamentary group in the Bavarian state assembly.

The desire to cooperate closely ahead of the elections was very marked both at grassroots level and within the CSU leadership, Mr. Glueck said.

Mr. Waigel was scheduled to officially open the con-

gress at 1300 GMT and hold a keynote speech Saturday, when Mr. Kohl is also due to address the 1,100 delegates.

Of all Germany's mainstream political parties, the CSU has pressed hardest for a strict interpretation of the Maastricht criteria which determine which countries will qualify for EMU.

Delegates are expected to vote on a resolution explicitly calling for the budget deficit target of three per cent of gross domestic product to be interpreted as "3.0" and no more.

The resolution also says countries should aim to have deficits well under this figure when there is no recession.

The motion could tie Mr. Waigel's hands when he takes part next year in the political decision-making process about who should take part in EMU, scheduled to begin on Jan. 1, 1999.



Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif (centre) and his cabinet Information Minister Mushahid Hussain (left) wave after concluding the session of parliament (AFP photo)

Army mediation calms Pakistani political crisis

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan's constitutional crisis appeared to be easing Friday after last-minute mediation by the military averted a move by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to impeach President Farooq Ahmed Leghari.

After the army's intervention the Supreme Court also adjourned a contempt case against Mr. Sharif and several of his colleagues for a week.

Army chief General Jehangir Karamat intervened late Thursday as the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML) and its allies decided to launch impeachment measures against Mr. Leghari for refusing to sign a law passed by the parliament.

Gen. Karamat, after a hurriedly-called meeting of commanders, met with Mr. Sharif and secured a postponement of what would have been a first such impeachment action in Pakistan's 50-year history — much of which has been under military rule.

Reports said the army chief was expected to hold further meetings with the key players in the row.

Political sources said the mediation had helped to calm tempers on all sides. There was no official word about further reconciliation efforts of Gen. Karamat, who also met Mr. Leghari Thursday.

But officials said a cabinet meeting headed by Mr.

Sharif Friday decided to take the "necessary steps to avert the political crisis which is seriously damaging the national economy and causing resentment among the public."

Many in political circles here however viewed Friday's situation as just a lull in the crisis, saying things would remain uncertain until a decision in the crucial contempt trial by a five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, whose earlier row with Mr. Sharif led to the crisis.

If convicted Mr. Sharif could be disqualified from holding a public office which would lead to the collapse of his nine-month government.

The government had moved to pass an amendment to the contempt of court act, allowing Mr. Sharif the right to appeal if convicted, but Mr. Leghari has so far refused to sign it. In a further bid to ease the situation, Mr. Sharif's counsel, S. M. Zafar, told the court in a much relaxed atmosphere that the premier had the highest regard for the judiciary.

Recalling a 1978 contempt proceedings against politician Abdul Wali Khan, Mr. Zafar said the case was dropped after the political leader expressed his high regard for the judiciary and his sorrow.

Mr. Sharif, making the first appearance in court by

a Pakistani head of government last Monday, said he could never "imagine contempt of court," adding "I have neither committed contempt of court, nor do I intend to do that."

The counsel for Law Minister Khalid Anwar and several other respondents also gave similar assurances. The hearing was adjourned until Nov. 28, when respondents will submit written replies to the charges.

The charges arise from a row which started in late September when relations soured between the judiciary and the government over the appointment of five high court judges named to the Supreme Court by the chief justice.

The standoff was finally resolved when Mr. Sharif agreed to Mr. Shah's nominations.

Meanwhile, in a separate case the Supreme Court Friday refused to bear an appeal to suspend a key constitutional amendment introduced by Mr. Sharif soon after assuming office. The amendment scrapped presidential powers to sack the government and national assembly, an authority used by Mr. Leghari in November 1996 to dismiss Benazir Bhutto as premier.

It has been challenged through a petition filed by an advocate. The hearing was adjourned until Thursday.

Belgian police arrest daughter of pastor suspected of murder

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The eldest daughter of a Belgian pastor suspected of killing six members of his family has been arrested on suspicion of murder, judicial officials said Friday.

They said the woman, Agnes Pandey, 39, was arrested Thursday evening. Sources close to the investigation said it was allegations she had made against her father since 1992 that led to his arrest last month.

"The daughter of the pastor was questioned Thursday and placed under arrest on suspicion of murder or attempted murder," prosecutor Hilde Vandevoorde said.

She refused to go into detail on the charges against Agnes Pandey, but said a "large-scale investigation" was under way. The announcement led to spec-

ulation of possible complicity between father and daughter.

Andreas Pandey, the 71-year-old pastor, was arrested on Oct. 16. He has been charged with murdering two ex-wives and four of his eight children between 1986 and 1990. He has denied the charges.

Bones from at least three bodies were found under a concrete slab in the basement of one of Hungarian-born Pandey's three homes in Brussels in late October. Scientific tests were still under way.

Prosecutors said that father and daughter might be brought together for questioning Saturday. Mr. Pandey was scheduled to hear his daughter's latest allegations against him Friday, but Belgian prosecutors expected little progress

as Mr. Pandey has refused to speak for the past month.

Mr. Pandey's ex-wives, two sons and two daughters disappeared without trace between 1986 and 1990, although he was said to have hired Hungarian "actors" to play the role of missing family members on several occasions.

During the investigation, police have found traces of blood on a stairwell and body tissue of undetermined origin in refrigerators at two of Mr. Pandey's homes.

A search of the third home turned up an urn containing what he said were the ashes of a sister who died in Hungary in 1994.

Prosecutors said further searches of Mr. Pandey's homes and gardens would be undertaken shortly.

Family members of British hostage in Cambodia offer reward to learn his fate

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — The family of British hostage Christopher Howes, who was abducted in northern Cambodia 20 months ago, Friday offered a reward as they appealed for information about his fate. British Ambassador to Phnom Penh George Edgar said no reliable information had been received about landmine clearance expert Mr. Howes, who was kidnapped along with his Cambodian interpreter Huon Hourth on March 26, 1996, by a group of armed men believed to be renegade members of the Khmer Rouge guerrilla movement.

Mr. Howes was working on a mine clearance operation near the famed Angkor Wat temple complex in northern Siem Reap province when he and Huon Hourth were taken. "Since the kidnap there have been all kinds of rumours and stories coming out about the fate of Christopher Howes," Mr. Edgar said, adding "it is quite possible" he is dead. "None of it is really what one could regard as reliable information to the effect that he is either alive or dead. If indeed he is dead, it would be better for the family to know."

The fate of Huon Hourth is also unknown. Mr. Edgar said he did not have details of the reward or the amount of money the family was offering. He said the embassy was acting on behalf of Mr. Howes' relatives in placing advertisements offering the reward in newspapers here.

"The families of both these brave men are experiencing great distress and unhappiness at the continued lack of reliable information coming out of Cambodia," an advertisement offering the reward reads.

British detectives have spent months in Cambodia investigating the 37-year-old's abduction but without result. The investigators left the country when heavy fighting between rival factions broke out in the capital in July and had since returned for a brief visit, to no avail, Mr. Edgar added.

"The present situation is they are on call and available to come to follow any new leads," he said. Former British soldier Forster, who was working for the Mines Advisory Group at the time of his kidnapping, was told by the kidnappers to go and bring back a ransom while his Cambodian demining team remained with them as hostages, reports at the time said. However, he insisted

they be released and that he and Huon Hourth served as hostages.

There have been several reported sightings of Mr. Howes, along with claims that he was being held at the Khmer Rouge stronghold of Anlong Veng in the far north of the country. One report said he had escaped from the base and been recaptured, while others said he was executed by the guerrillas, who deny having anything to do with the affair. Officials in Phnom Penh earlier this year said he had been released and was on his way to the capital.

Most observers here say they believe he is dead and that a renegade Khmer Rouge unit simply seeking money was responsible.

The Mines Advisory Group's Cambodian programme director, Ian Brown, said he and his colleagues had not given up hope that Mr. Howes and Huon Hourth were alive but accepted the chances were dwindling.

"Until we have substantive evidence or proof that they are dead we will go on hoping they are alive," he said. "However, as time goes on it's not getting any easier."

Spain has demanded joint control with Britain of Gibraltar's airport and airspace. London has refused, leading Madrid to ban Gibraltar-bound flights using Spanish airspace.

Britain has hit back with a threat to keep Spain out of NATO's integrated military structure until the restrictions are lifted.

But Mr. Matutes said the restrictions will remain until London yields part of its control of the airport.

The Foreign Office spokesman said Mr. Cook had made clear Britain could only accept a "sovereignty neutral" solution, and not one which "advanced a country's sovereignty claim."

But he added that discussions were continuing at senior official level, that Britain was examining Spanish proposals and that they "hope to make progress in the next few weeks."

Apparently keen not to inflame the row, the British spokesman avoided answering a question about London's threat to block Spain's integration in a planned new NATO military command structure.

Madrid is pressing for a return of "the Rock" — ceded to Britain in the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht — which is on the southern coast of the Iberian Peninsula at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea.

Britain, Spain deadlocked in NATO row over Gibraltar

LUXEMBOURG (AFP) — A fresh effort by Britain and Spain to resolve differences over Gibraltar, which threaten to block a revamp of NATO command structures, failed Friday to break their deadlock, the two sides indicated.

Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and his Spanish counterpart, Abel Matutes met over breakfast for about an hour on the sidelines of a European Union jobs summit in Luxembourg.

"Each side held to its previous position and so no progress was made," the Spanish minister said, and this conclusion was confirmed by a British Foreign Office spokesman.

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Red Cross appeals for help for war-battered Congo

NAIROBI (AFP) — More than 370,000 people in the war-battered Republic of Congo are in urgent need of food, shelter and health aid, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said Friday.

The federation appealed for funds of 5.6 million Swiss francs (around \$4 million), in a statement issued in Nairobi about a month after Congo, particularly the capital Brazzaville, emerged from a devastating civil war.

"Funding of 5.6 million Swiss francs is sought to assist more than 370,000 especially vulnerable individuals in Brazzaville and the coastal town of Pointe Noire," the federation said.

"In the coming nine months, working with the

Congolese Red Cross society, the International Federation plans wide-ranging relief, shelter, sanitation and health activities for 300,000 returnees to Brazzaville, while 72,500 displaced persons in Pointe Noire will receive food rations, soap and blankets."

The Congolese Red Cross society "has rightly won high praise for the brave and unstinting work of its staff and volunteers, who often put themselves in harm's way to bring neutral and impartial assistance to a terrified population" during the fighting which blasted much of the capital from early June to late October this year.

Up to 7,000 people are estimated to have died in the fighting between supporters of President Pascal Lissouba

and his rival and predecessor, Denis Sassou Nguesso.

General Sassou Nguesso ousted Mr. Lissouba in late October with the assistance of Angolan government troops and installed himself as president.

"We hope that our donors will generously recognise such outstanding courage by ensuring this appeal is covered rapidly and in full," the federation said.

Didier Revol, a federation official recently returned from Brazzaville, told reporters the Red Cross facilities in Congo had been left in "an appalling condition."

Vehicles had been stolen, offices looted and volunteers had to go "back to basics" to bring first aid to the war's victims.

Colombian journalist killed

BOGOTA (AFP) — The editor of a magazine was shot to death outside his office in the western city of Armenia — the third Colombian journalist to be killed in less than one month, police said.

Quindio Department Governor Belen Sanchez condemned the murder Thursday of 41-year-old

Jairo Elias Marquez, and said police had captured a suspect.

Marquez was the third Colombian journalist to have been killed since Oct. 24, when the dismembered body of newspaper Deputy Editor Alejandro Castillo was found in a town on the border with Ecuador.

On Nov. 8, radio reporter

Francisco Castro was killed in northern Sucre department.

The International Press Society based in Miami, Florida, recently called on Bogota to investigate the murders of 110 journalists in Colombia over the past 20 years, 90 per cent of which remain unsolved.

Jawbone of ancient mouse may rewrite evolution — scientist

MELBOURNE, Australia (AFP) — The fossilised jawbone of a mouse-like creature unearthed near here eight months ago may force a dramatic revision of theories of evolution, a prominent scientist said here Friday.

The jawbone, which has four teeth intact, has been dated at 115 million years old and may be the oldest placental mammal fossil ever found, Tom Rich, senior scientist at the Museum of Victoria, told reporters.

Until now, placental mammals were thought to have evolved in Asia, making their way to Australia only in the past five million years.

Mr. Rich hailed it as "El Dorado", adding: "This is going to create a stir for some time to come."

"It is too big a thorn in the side of the accepted picture to be ignored."

"Humans are placental mammals, so this fossil could very well represent us near the very base of the evolutionary scale."

If not, the find at Flat Rocks site near Inverloch in Gippsland, "then represents an entirely new kind of mammal", he said.

The fossil was discovered in southeastern Victoria in March by Mr. Rich and his wife, Pat Vicker-Rich, a professor at Monash University.

Most of Australia's native mammals are marsupials and, unlike other mammals like mice and humans which grow their young inside the womb with a placenta to serve to channel nourishment to the foetus, marsupials develop in a pouch outside the mother's body.

The finding has just been published in this month's American Science Journal, with reaction from other scientists.

He said while a number of scientists in the journal were sceptical, with one backing him and another "sitting on the fence", the discovery could only be disproved by further fossil finds.

The fossil dates from when Australia was still connected to Antarctica and it was the same age or even older than a similar fossil found in Mongolia about 10 years ago, Mr. Rich said.

"It is now plausible, owing to this discovery, that placental mammals may have been widespread on all land masses on earth 115 million years ago," he said.

The Gippsland fossil, named *Austrobaena nyktos*, lived alongside polar dinosaurs.

Preparing for another dig Sunday, Mr. Rich said if he and his wife were right, placental mammals evolved in Australia, died out and then were reintroduced five million years ago.

India repatriating tribal refugees to Bangladesh

GUWAHATI, India (AFP) — India Friday began the repatriation of 45,000 Buddhist tribal refugees to Bangladesh, officials said.

Administrators in the far-eastern state of Tripura said about 1,500 people from the Chakma tribe were sent back to Bangladesh Friday in the first leg of the programme.

They said some 6,000 Chakmas would be sent back in the next week, ending more than a decade in refugee camps in Tripura, which borders Bangladesh.

About 50,000 Chakmas fled their homeland to India in April 1986 following alleged persecution by Muslims and Bangladeshi security troops. They were sheltered in six relief camps in Tripura.

Chakma leader Bonoy Chakma told AFP by telephone from the border refugee camp of Takubari that 600 tribals had been sent to Bangladesh in March.

"The process came to a temporary halt after March as the Bangladeshi authori-

ties overseeing the repatriation failed to implement a 20-point rehabilitation package agreed upon, causing apprehension in the minds of the refugees."

Bangladeshi officials camping in Tripura said they expected full repatriation.

"We expect all the refugees to return home as they now have a sense of security," an official said.

Talks aimed at sealing a peace treaty to end a 22-year insurgency in southeastern Bangladesh have been set for Nov. 26, officials in

Dhaka said.

Tribal rebels have been battling for more than two decades for self-rule and the expulsion of thousands of Bengali-speaking settlers from the 13,000-square-kilometre hill districts bordering India and Burma.

Unofficial figures put the death toll from the violence at around 25,000. Thousands of people, mainly from the Buddhist Chakma tribe, were forced to take refuge in Tripura. The government says only 2,500 people have died.

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All is well....

AS THE saying goes, all is well that ends well. The Russian-brokered accord between Iraq and the U.N. Security Council appears to be holding after Baghdad consented to allow in all the U.N. inspectors in return for some implied pledge by the council to ease the sanctions regime and to see "light at the end of the tunnel," as Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov put it. Under this formulation, both Iraq and the council get what they have always sought or should have sought. Iraq has been campaigning vigorously for ending the crippling sanctions applied against it by the U.N. and had apparently been willing to walk the extra mile in order to satisfy the major powers, especially the U.S. on their need for a strict verification of Baghdad's compliance with Security Council resolutions. The controversy that was simmering all along between the council and Iraq, ending up as it did in this month's standoff that threatened the breakout of military hostilities, was perhaps attributable to the fact that some permanent members in the council had entertained an agenda that went beyond the inspection requirements per se. As the sanctions against Iraq have remained for almost seven years and appeared as open-ended, the regime in Iraq might have easily decided to up the ante in a bid to extricate a clear commitment that in return for its faithful compliance with the relevant resolutions, the permanent members of the council, led by the U.S., would amend the U.N. agenda and accept the Iraqi offer. Washington seems to have reluctantly accepted the Russian-brokered deal after sensing that Moscow, Paris and Beijing would not go along with the U.S. and Britain in adopting a military solution for the standoff.

Hopefully now the crisis that erupted in the region three weeks ago is left behind us, and that all the parties opt for a new era of cooperation instead of confrontation. The irony in all this latest episode in the Arab Gulf is that the new deal is actually an old deal since Iraq has always wanted to pin down the council to a timetable which could end its ordeal in return for its full cooperation with the U.N. The parties risked another military showdown over what many people thought was a media stunt. But, as the saying goes, all is well that ends well.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek said not have to be a genius to realise that the U.S. Middle East policy has met with total failure as numerous examples attest to this fact. One example lies in Washington's declared policy of dual containment directed at Iraq and Iran over the past five years which failed to achieve anything at all, he said. This policy Dr. Fanek said, had aimed at toppling the Iraqi regime and changing Iran's conduct. As to the Middle East peace process which Washington sponsored, it too met with failure, with stability, security and peace not materialising, and the region is certainly not enjoying the prosperity its people were promised from the peace process, according to the writer. Despite Washington's financial aid to Egypt and Israel, being its closest Middle East allies, Washington was rebuffed by Egypt which declined to attend the U.S.-sponsored Doha economic summit, and Israel, under Netanyahu, mutinied against its American ally and refused to freeze the settlement programmes and implement the Oslo accord, said Dr. Fanek. He said in the question of Iraq, Washington was faced with outright rejection by its Arab neighbours against a military strike on the country. The writer said it is because American Jews dominate U.S. foreign policy that Washington has met with such failures.

Al Ra'i's Nazih charged that 125 water tankers have lately been found to be selling water unfit for human consumption. The concerned authorities have now stopped these trucks but only God knows the extent of damage to public health the water they carried had caused, said the writer. The water that was transported by these trucks came from springs that were declared by the Water Authority of Jordan to be unsafe and yet no one cared to monitor these springs to ensure that portable water tankers did not fill up at these sites, according to the writer. The health authorities in the Amman area publicly announced the problem, but nobody knows what has been the situation in the other governorates, Nazih said. The writer said if the concerned authorities were not aware of the fact that the trucks were getting their supply from unsafe springs they should now impose stricter control on water supply operations in order to safeguard public health.

Jordanian Perspective

Try the policy of inclusion — it works

By Dr. Musa Keilani

AS IF the image of Islam were not distorted enough, the Luxor assassinations and their paymasters tried to make it both abhorrent and revolting.

The massacre at Luxor last week has shattered the relative calm that prevailed in the running battle between militants and the Egyptian government for several months and pulled the rug from under the feet of Cairo's assertion that it had gained the upper hand in curbing militancy.

We cannot but shudder at the thought of such despicable actions as the killing of innocent civilians whose only mistake, if any, was to have been at that particular place at that particular time.

While we condemn the slaughter in Luxor in the strongest of voices, the fact that it happened so near to us and in a country with which we share much in common raises the question, how was it allowed to happen.

By design or coincidence, the carnage at Luxor of nearly 60 foreign tourists took place on the same day when a military court near Cairo opened a mass trial of extremists, who, for some strange reason, include people with very little in common as far as extremism is concerned. What could a 16-year-old boy whose parents live in the United States, and is looking forward to higher studies there have in common with medical doctors, lawyers, or expatriates who make up the big "militant group" which, according to the charge sheet, tried to overthrow the regime?

But that the attack at Luxor and the opening of the trial in Cairo took place at almost the same time has underlined the most serious flaw in the way the Egyptian regime has been handling the militancy problem. If anything, the summary trials by military courts and the nearly 60 executions of "extremists" in Egypt in the last three years or so have contributed significantly not to checking militancy but

fuelling it out of control. That is not to say that a central group pulled strings all around and ensured that the worst massacre of foreign tourists and the trial of the largest single group of "militants" occurred at the same time. Nothing could be far from the reality because it is almost established that there is no central leadership for any extremist group in Egypt.

Today, there exist hundreds of small groups made up of desperate, alienated, frustrated, young men who have joined Al Gamaa out of revenge for the brutality with which the regime had dealt with them when some were suspected of having known someone implicated in planning a terrorist attack. Many have lost fathers, brothers and sons who have either been executed by the regime or thrown into jails for long terms, and they have an ax to grind with the government. And the more brutal the regime tends to be in its dealings with the situation the fiercer their resolve to exact revenge or be a "martyr" in the name of religion. That is a lesson the Egyptian regime has to draw from its experience. Then perhaps the Jordanian example comes into play. Had our leadership pursued a policy similar to Egypt's, then it would have been a totally different story in Jordan. Instead, from the inception of the so-called fundamentalist groups, His Majesty King Hussein saw the need to recognise and accept that such groups are made up of members of our own larger extended family and not aliens. That set out the basic Jordanian approach to the entire issue. We have always recognised and accepted that there among us people who tend to be overzealous when it comes to religion but that it should not mean they should be treated as social pariahs and outcasts. That explains the wise policy of inclusion that King Hussein has followed since the day he assumed power. Instead of rounding up and throwing every

"suspect" into prison, the King pursued the wiser policy by understanding, through dialogue and listening to what the so-called extremists and zealots were seeking, and he always sought to strike a middle ground and encourage the logic of moderation. That approach was most fruitful and remains a key pillar of the Jordanian policy. It explains the peaceful existence among us of people who, in a frenzied interpretation of religion, can be termed as more "militant" than some of their counterparts in Egypt. But they are very much part and parcel of our society, and, more importantly, they feel that they belong to the one Jordanian family despite nuances and differences that might crop up now and then.

That is the reason that we in Jordan do not have to send an armed escort or two with every tourist bus that visits the country.

Equally important is the tolerance with which we hear out novel, perhaps even daring ideas. True there have been the few cases of attempted sabotage in the last few years. And while those incidents were deemed isolated incidents, the Kingdom's reactions are channelled not automatically towards confrontation but towards dialogue and reason. It is befitting at this moment to recall what happened here a few weeks ago when the showdown between the Majali government and the Islamic movement developed into a real heated crisis, HRH Crown Prince Hassan, then the Regent, visited the top leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in hospital and spent hours with him. The visit reflects the cohesive nature of the special fabric which binds the Jordanian society. It is a milieu which does not breed bloody violence nor does it generate Luxor-like massacres of guests and tourists. The Jordanian example inclusion and moderation towards the fundamentalists is to be emulated if the Algeria-Luxor phenomenon is to be curtailed.

Writers applaud Iraq's steadfastness, denounce Luxor massacre

REVIEWED BY
ELIA NASRALLAH

Arabic dailies last week continued to highlight the Iraq-U.S. standoff, and concentrated as well on the massacre of tourists in Egypt, the Middle East and North Africa economic forum in Doha, and domestic affairs.

SULTAN AL Hattab of Al Ra'i said the Iraqi leadership made a very clever move by focusing the world community's attention on the plight of the Iraqi people resulting from the sanctions and forced the world to move towards solving this issue. The U.S. had hoped to see Iraq die a slow death by depriving its people of every means to rebuild themselves and their country economically, scientifically and socially but the latest crisis caused the world to look again at the injustice done to the Iraqis and exposed the U.S. as a power lust for war and aggression, said Hattab. He added that the Iraqis were provoked to take some action after it became clear that the U.S. members of the U.N. weapons inspection team were only spies intent on causing further harm to the Arab country. He said the Iraqis have not closed the door to the U.N. and have opened a new chapter in their relations with the world community, adding that their move was timely and one that is bound to bring about a lasting settlement to their problem.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Taher Adwan said that although Saddam Hussein did not succeed in defeating his adversaries in the Gulf war and has been so far unsuccessful in lifting the sanctions on his country, he has succeeded in exposing the U.S. before the whole world as a power intent on committing aggression against small nations. When the Arabs listen to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright slandering and cursing President Saddam openly during her tour of the Arab capitals they realise that Washington is not harbouring enmity towards Iraq for allegedly not implementing the U.N. resolutions but rather because it

hates Saddam for trying to build a power with high level technology in order to strengthen the Arab World in the face of Israel and the U.S. onslaught, said the writer. He said Washington is left with no justification for launching an aggression on Iraq and for perpetuating the sanctions on its people, and for this reason, all the Arab allies of the U.S. have now changed their position towards Iraq. It is hoped, said the writer, that the Arab countries' stand vis-a-vis Washington's enmity towards Iraq will serve as a first step towards a true solidarity that will foil all attempts of aggression on the Arab Nation.

Luxor Mahmoud Rimawi of Al Ra'i said the terrorists only did harm to their own country in addition to committing a crime against humanity. As tourists the victims were guests of the Egyptian people to whom the terrorists belong, and the attack on these visitors reflects the criminal nature of those who brag about their drive to install Islamic rule in Egypt because Islam does not call for criminal actions or murdering innocent civilians, noted the writer. He said apart from the fact that tourism represents a facet of Islamic society, and a means for promoting world culture, the tourism industry is the main source of income for the Egyptian

assassins and terrorists Oreb Rintawi of Al Dustour said that they are most probably elements who had been recruited by the Americans to fight in Afghanistan. These terrorists who seem to have mastered the art of crimes against humanity are being employed now to strike at Egypt for resuming its leadership role in the Arab World against Israel and because of Cairo's new moves to back the Palestinian people in regaining their rights in their homeland, said the writer. The attack on the tourists in Luxor is a heinous crime against humanity but if the criminal elements have indeed infiltrated into the Islamic groups in Egypt, the Egyptian society is certainly facing a serious problem leading to catastrophe, according to the writer. He said it is noted that the attack came at a moment when Egypt has started to assume the role of leadership of the Arab World in the face of Israel and its allies, but he expressed hope that Egypt will take all necessary measures to save itself and the Arab World of this danger.

Fahed Fanek of Al Ra'i criticised the Palestine National Authority (PNA) for failing to attend the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) summit in Doha where the question of Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian lands was high on the agenda. The writer said delegates launched a scathing attack on Israel's practices and its failure to respect peace accords and its undermining of the Oslo accords that has caused the present deadlock in the peace process. In fact the final communiqué in Doha emphasised the need for a settlement based on the exchange of land for peace and for the Palestinians to regain their legitimate rights. By absenting itself from Doha, Dr. Fanek said, the PNA proved that it is succumbing to the desires of Egypt which led the chorus against the MENA summit as did Lebanon which could not take an independent decision from Syria and also boycotted the meeting. He said the Palestinians have thus proved that they do not have the power to take an independent decision of their own.

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Observers who followed the scenario after Iraq's expulsion of the U.N. inspectors must have realised that the U.S. was preparing for a crusade against the Arab Nation and Iraq in particular, according to Bassam Emoush a writer for Al Ra'i. Emoush said that after maintaining seven years of crippling sanctions against Iraq the U.S. found in Baghdad's expulsion of the American inspectors an excuse to launch yet another war on the Iraqi people. The U.S. arrogance was clear in the administration's demand that the leadership in Iraq be changed so that the sanctions can be lifted, he added. But he asked why the sole world superpower is unable to change the leadership in Cuba which lies closer to its shores than Iraq? By bombing Iraq's installations the U.S. can in no way change the Iraqi leadership but can only cause more suffering to the Iraqi people, he said. The writer added that the Iraqis are tired of the presence of American spies amongst them and are exacerbated by the sanctions which seem endless; and they have all the right to rise against injustice.

Discussing the massacre committed in

people and one that the terrorists have targeted. The writer said such acts must be condemned by all Arabs and Muslims whom, he said, should unite against terrorism and against their common enemies who are believed to be behind such acts.

Al Ra'i's Fakhri Kaware said the Luxor massacre is another link in a chain of acts of aggression perpetrated by enemies of the Arab Nation, harbouring hatred and seeking to harm the Arabs and Muslims. These enemies, he said, have been active in Algeria where thousands have fallen in terrorist acts, and they seem to be turning their attention towards Egypt. Accusing the U.S. and Israel of being behind these massacres, the writer said the enemies are striking at Egypt's economic interests so as to weaken Egypt and force it to go begging to the U.S. for aid which can be offered under severe conditions. The writer said it is clear that the enemies of Egypt have succeeded in penetrating the Islamic groups in the country and creating cells that direct their attention towards committing massacres and creating chaos in the Egyptian society.

Describing the attackers in Luxor as

Does not apply

To the Editor:

REGARDING THE letter to the editor of Mr. Bob Robertson (Jordan Times, November 11, 1997) criticising my article: "History says the Palestinians are the original inhabitants of Palestine" (Jordan Times Nov. 10, 1997) I wish to state at the outset that as a Christian I did not exclude the spiritual part of the Old Testament nor did I intend to do so as the New Testament is a completion of the purely spiritual part of the Old Testament. Apart from that it must be admitted that a big part of the Old Testament contains either pure history or pure Hebrew legend or Hebrew mythology all of which have nothing to do with our Christian spirituality or doctrine, and with which I may agree or disagree, believe or disbelieve. St. Paul himself, one of the bastions of Christianity, very often dissociated himself from certain rites, practices and customs mentioned in the Old Testament, even Jesus Christ himself countermanded Moses' command about divorce.

If God did tell Israel (Beni Israil) to enter Palestine this promise was fulfilled in the past and does not apply at all to the present time. It is all very well for those pseudo-theologians sitting in their plush salons to theorise about the so-called divine right of Israel to Palestine thereby justifying by implication the tragic state of millions of Palestinians both Christians and Muslims. God through Jesus Christ had inaugurated a universal spiritual Christian kingdom and not a state born as a result of Jewish terrorism resulting in the killings, massacres and expulsions of millions of Palestinians all of which constituted a real holocaust for them.

I hope this letter will put an end to the whole matter as I am not prepared to pursue polemics thereon.

Pascal B. Karmy
Amman

LETTERS

An array of suffering

To the Editor:

THE BRUTALITY of the U.S. in our time has superseded all other tyranny known to mankind since Cain the son of Adam.

The deaf and blind attitude practised by Capitol Hill and the White House towards the Israeli intransigence, is only surpassed by the grandiloquent language that conceals hatred for the Iraqi people and the lust for the oil rich deserts of Arabia.

The world has to realise that the atomic bombs dropped on Japan and the "agent orange" sprayed over Vietnam are "minor" compared to the continued array of suffering inflicted by U.S. on the Iraqi people.

If the U.N. and its hushed up members have become spineless and heartless in the hands of the U.S., then we only have to pray for the spirit of Joan of Arc to manifest herself to liberate this ruthless world from the black hand of the U.S./U.N. partnership.

Fawaz Hafiz
Amman

Something to think about

To the Editor:

HAPPY THANKSGIVING America! I hope that while all Americans in the United States and abroad are thanking the Lord for what they have and enjoying their Thanksgiving turkey with all the trimmings, the dying children of Iraq are remembered in their prayers for what they have not.

President Clinton has gone on record saying that the sanctions will not be lifted until Saddam Hussein is out of power. In the meantime, official records have indicated that there are 5,000 Iraqi children under the age of 5 dying every month because of the lack of food and medicine.

Therefore, hypothetically speaking, if President Saddam Hussein stays in power for three more years, 180,000 children under the age of 5 will die. I call on the American people to take this simple calculation into consideration while enjoying their holiday weekend.

Aida Dabbas
Amman

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

ما جاء في العدد

Tension between Iraq and U.S. reflects negatively on AFM trading

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Turnover at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) decreased slightly last week as a result of the crisis between Iraq and the United States and the weak role of foreign investors in buying shares of Jordanian firms, brokers said Friday.

The AFM weekly bulletin indicated that the turnover during last week totalled JD5.6 million compared with JD5.7 million in previous week, or 1.8 per cent decrease.

"The tension between the U.S. and Iraq has reflected negatively on the market. Most of the industrial firms that recorded profits this year as a result of its dealing with Iraq were afraid that 1998 profits might be affected by this crisis," Nasser

Amad, a broker at the stock market, said.

"The people here thought that a confrontation between Iraq and the U.S. was inevitable. The expectations were that the U.S. will hit Iraq after the Doha summit," said Naim Nageeh, a broker at the AFM.

Mr. Nageeh said that news reports that the U.S. might introduce new amendments to the oil-for food agreement with Iraq would enhance dealing at the AFM.

The broker was referring to the December agreement that allowed Baghdad to sell \$2 billion worth of oil every six months in return for humanitarian purchases.

Last week, the U.S. said that it was ready to give Iraq more con-

cessions in regard to the agreement if Baghdad agreed to allow U.N. inspectors to return back to Iraq.

"Such amendments would enhance the chances of Jordanian industrial firms to supply Iraq with food and medicine which will reflect positively on the sectors of banks and insurance companies at the AFM," said Mr. Nageeh.

Mr. Amad told the Jordan Times that among the other reasons that affected the turnover last week were the decrease in the foreign investors' purchases of shares, the preparations of most of the AFM firms to close its accounts and the liquidity problem in the market.

"As a result of the liquidity problem in the stock market, expectations were high that foreign portfolios would inject more

money into the market, which in fact did not occur," he added.

Despite the increase in the turnover, the weekly bulletin indicated that the general index price reached 172.2 point compared with 171.06 point in the previous week.

It showed that the banking sector won the lion's share in the overall turnover with JD3.3 million or 59 per cent followed by the industrial sector with JD1.7 million or 31.4 per cent, services sector with JD410,000 or 7.3 per cent and insurance sector with JD130,000 or 2.3 per cent.

Out of 81 firms that changed hands in the weekly turnover, the prices of 33 witnessed increases in their prices, 20 recorded no change while 28 firms registered loss.

Bank boosts lending to municipal and village councils

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cities and Villages Development Bank (CVDB) granted JD 12.3 million worth of loans to municipal and village councils throughout the Kingdom over the past 10 months of this year, compared with JD 10.7 million during the same period in 1996, a statistical bulletin issued by the bank said Friday.

The bulletin noted an increase of 33.6 per cent in the amounts of loans granted during the first ten months of this year, in comparison with the same period in 1996.

Municipal councils accounted for 95.14 per cent of the total loans, while village councils accounted only for 4.86 per cent. Bank sources attributed the low percentage of loans granted to village councils to a combination of factors, including the conversion of village councils into municipal councils and

for integrating them into municipal councils.

Statistics suggest that there are 305 municipal councils and 143 village councils, which are about to be transformed or integrated into existing municipal councils, except the Greater Amman municipality.

The bank's board of directors has already approved 231 loans worth JD14.33 million, including 151 loans with a total value of JD 8.25 million, to cover costs of constructing municipal and village roads.

The remaining amounts will be used for productive projects, construction of public buildings and municipal premises, and constructing of pavements and embankments, in addition to the purchase of equipment and machinery for municipal and village councils.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES

(March 21 to April 19) If you look at your activities from a new point of view today, you will increase your chances for advancement. Make it a point to stay at home later this evening with your loved ones and enjoy their company.

TAURUS

(April 20 to May 20) Be sure you don't try to force your ideas and opinions on anyone today, or you will greatly regret it. Get plenty of rest later this evening, since you will need your strength for the busy days ahead with career activities.

GEMINI

(May 21 to June 21) Stop worrying over a private matter today which is really not worth so much concern. It may not be wise to completely trust your judgement, so seek out the advice of knowledgeable people concerning business activities.

MOON CHILDREN

(June 22 to July 21) Steer clear of an acquaintance today who is full of ego and little else or you will experience quite a bit of difficulty. Get involved in a civic affair, and gain much greater prestige in the days ahead for your efforts.

LEO

(July 22 to August 21) If you take a little trip today, make sure it is to a place where you can do something of a constructive nature. Show appreciation for your friends by doing something which they will be quite grateful for in the day ahead.

VIRGO

(August 22 to September 22) You should avoid a silly, time-wasting person today who wants to lead you in the wrong direction. Instead, spend your time and money carefully, thereby you will have funds available for the lean times which come about.

LIBRA

(September 23 to October 22) Listen to the suggestions of a progressive friend today, as these could prove invaluable to you in the days ahead. Show more affection for the one you love by doing something special for him or her which is appreciated.

SCORPIO

(October 23 to November 21) If you have a little at-home project which needs to be done today, make sure you have all the correct tools and information before starting, thereby avoiding any unexpected mistakes or difficulties which could develop.

SAGITTARIUS

(November 22 to December 21) Get together with a fun-loving friend today, and enjoy a pleasant recreation together. You should not allow a fellow associate get you involved in a dull chore which won't allow you to succeed in your career activities.

CAPRICORN

(December 22 to January 20) If you have some ideas to make your home life more charming and harmonious today, get your loved ones opinion before using them and thereby avoiding any difficulties. Later this evening will be good for seeing close friend.

AQUARIUS

(January 21 to February 19) This is a good time today to catch up on correspondence with friends from a long distance away. You should not waste one moment of this great day or evening, so seek out friends for recreational activities which are fun.

PISCES

(February 20 to March 20) This is the time today to handle any business or financial difficulties, and labour on increasing your income. You should listen to the advice of a neighbour, since the solution to any difficulties could be right next door.

Birthstone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

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JOB OPPORTUNITY

WE ARE LEADING DISTRIBUTORS OF CONSUMER PRODUCTS EXCLUSIVELY REPRESENTING PROCTER & GAMBLE, CLOROX AND MARS IN JORDAN.

We are looking for young and dynamic candidates for the position of:

1. SALES SECTION MANAGER.
2. VAN SALES REPRESENTATIVES.
3. SALES MERCHANDISER.

Requirements for the above positions must be:

- Aged between 21-29.
- Valid Jordanian driving licence.
- Pleasant and extrovert personality.
- Problem solver.
- Creativity and innovation.
- Priority setting.
- Good communication skills.
- Good command of English/Arabic.

We offer the successful candidate:

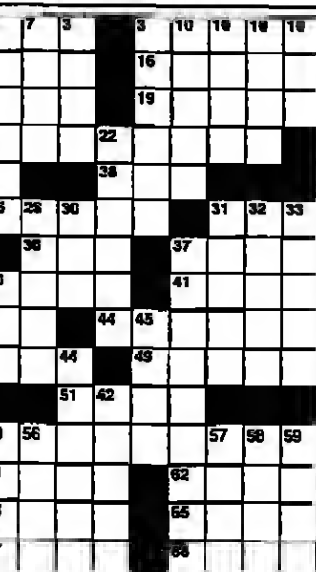
- A professional work environment.
- Comprehensive training.
- Career potential in sales.
- A competitive remuneration package.

Candidates who meet the above specifications, are kindly requested to fax their detailed CV to:

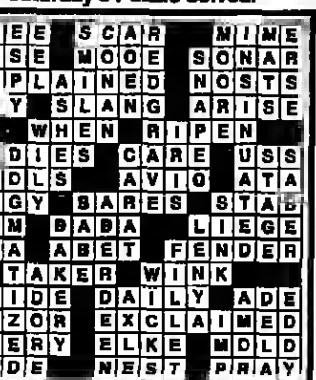
FAX NO. 06-826289

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- 1 Mrs. Dick Tracy
 - 5 — show
 - 9 Feather shirt
 - 14 Brigham
 - 15 Young's destination
 - 16 Adjutant
 - 17 African city
 - 18 Nothing
 - 19 Constellation
 - 20 component
 - 21 Jeremy of the movies
 - 22 Breakfast choice
 - 23 — of knowledge
 - 24 Ginger —
 - 25 John or Bo
 - 28 Hunting gun
 - 31 Convert into leather
 - 34 Disinclined
 - 36 "We are — amused!"
 - 37 Roman politician
 - 38 Judicial wear
 - 39 Divvy up
 - 41 Skip
 - 42 — out a living
 - 43 Bon — (high society)
 - 44 Make wrinkled
 - 46 State: abbr.
 - 47 Rool
 - 49 Tilt
 - 50 "— Way We Were"
 - 51 Busy as —
 - 53 Peter Pan's home
 - 60 Tortilla chip dip
 - 61 Song from Luciano
 - 62 In — of
 - 63 Overturn
 - 64 Boer measure
 - 65 Eve's address
 - 66 Borscht
 - 67 Ingredient
 - 68 Makes excellent grades
 - 69 Florida county
- DOWN
- 1 Melody
 - 2 Short jacket
 - 3 Caroled
 - 4 Protected from the elements
 - 5 Old-fashioned
 - 6 One or the other
 - 7 Cheese store
 - 8 choice
 - 9 Home of the Incas
 - 10 Suppress
 - 11 Radium
 - 12 explorer
 - 13 unknown: abbr.
 - 14 On — and needles
 - 15 Curve
 - 16 Annoys
 - 17 Florida gulf town
 - 18 Listing
 - 19 Do, re, mi, etc.
 - 20 Queen of Persia
 - 21 Forced
 - 22 Gardening tool
 - 23 — friendly
 - 24 Plays unfairly
 - 25 Gorge
 - 26 Boob tube
 - 27 Wins out over
 - 28 Back of the neck
 - 29 Word in an ultimatum
 - 30 California wine
 - 31 valley
 - 32 Comedie
 - 33 Verdi heroine
 - 34 Prerequisite
 - 35 Beach hill
 - 36 Huge sandwich



Saturday's Puzzle solved:

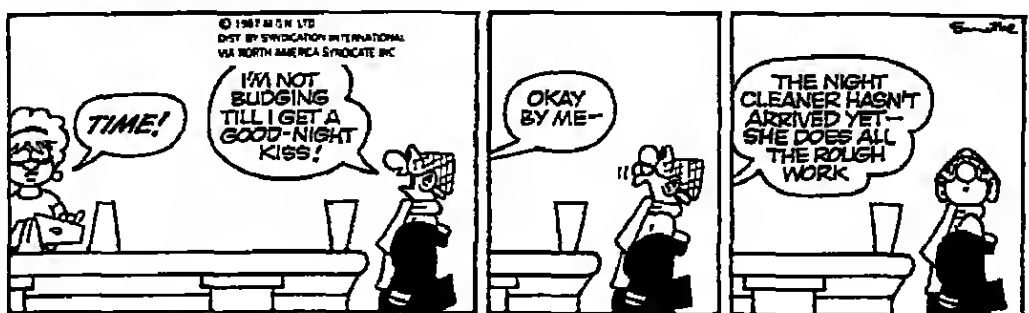


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- 37 Forced
 - 40 Gardening tool
 - 45 — friendly
 - 47 Plays unfairly
 - 48 Gorge
 - 50 Boob tube
 - 52 Wins out over
 - 53 Back of the neck
 - 54 Word in an ultimatum
 - 55 California wine
 - 56 valley
 - 57 Comedie
 - 58 Verdi heroine
 - 59 Prerequisite
 - 60 Beach hill
 - 61 Huge sandwich

Peanuts



Andy Capp

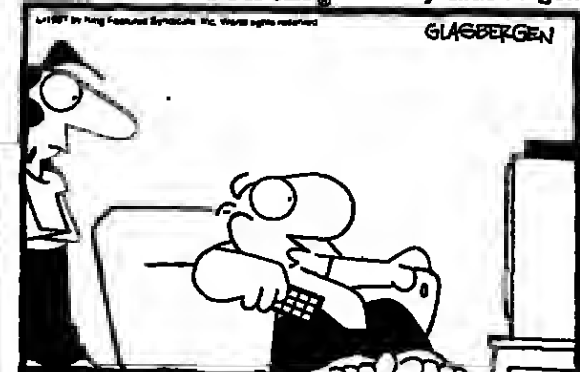


Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF.

By Glasbergen



"For the last 15 minutes I've been watching a lion tear apart a zebra. Let's order a pizza."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RAMEF

AWNTY

DIMPER

TASTLE

Print answer here:

Yesterday's Jumble: HUMIO SNACK LADING ALWAYS

Answer: He listened to this while he practiced — SWING MUSIC

HOROSCOPE

FOR SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1997

ARIES
 From April 19 to May 13. If you look at your active point of view today, you will move for advancement. Make it a point later this evening with your loved ones.

Taurus
 From May 14 to June 20. Be sure you don't try to do too much in any one day. You will get plenty of rest later this evening. I will need your strength for the busy day.

GEMINI
 From June 21 to July 20. Stop worrying over a problem which is really not worth so much. It is not a wise idea to completely move it, so seek out the advice of knowledge concerning business activities.

MOON CHILDREN
 From July 21 to August 21. Stay clear of an argument as full of ego and little else of yours. It is quite a bit of difficulty. Get involved in it, and gain much greater pleasure and for your efforts.

LEO
 From August 22 to September 21. Take a little break from a place where you can do constructive work. Show appreciation by doing something which will be helpful for the day ahead.

VIRGO
 From September 22 to October 21. You should not waste your time today. You want to be in a wrong direction. Instead, spend time carefully, thereby you will have for the lean times which come about.

LIRRA
 From October 22 to November 21. Listen to the progressive friends today, as they are valuable to you in the days ahead. Action for the future is better than doing it for him or her who is not appreciated.

SCORPIO
 From November 22 to December 21. You have a job which needs to be done today. I have all the energy and interest in it, thereby you will have a difficult time to do it.

SAGITTARIUS
 From December 22 to January 21. Get together with friends today, as they are valuable to you. You should not be involved in a situation where you are not successful in your efforts.

CAPRICORN
 From January 22 to February 21. You have a job which needs to be done today. I have all the energy and interest in it, thereby you will have a difficult time to do it.

AQUARIUS
 From February 22 to March 21. You have a job which needs to be done today. I have all the energy and interest in it, thereby you will have a difficult time to do it.

PISCES
 From March 22 to April 21. You have a job which needs to be done today. I have all the energy and interest in it, thereby you will have a difficult time to do it.

After Half
 By Glasgow

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Foreign investments increase

**** ACCORDING TO** the statistical report issued by the Companies Control Department, foreign investments during October 1997 amounted to JD 7.7 million. The figure accounted for 34 per cent of the JD 22.3 million total investments for that month. The report said 40 non-Jordanian investors last month invested JD 7,680,000 compared with JD 3,485,000 during the same month in 1996. Most of the foreign investments flowed to the trade sector, where the volume of investment amounted to JD 7,037,000. The service sector received JD 369,000, and the industrial sector took only JD 275,000, the report added.

Public shareholding companies accounted for 40 per cent of the total investments, while joint partnerships accounted for 26 per cent, and limited liability companies for 12 per cent. The report said 310 companies were registered last month with a capital of JD 22.3 million compared with 290 companies with a capital of JD 276.7 million during October 1996.

The report noted that foreign investments during the first ten months of this year totalled JD 18.2 million thus accounting for nine per cent of the total investments of JD 197.3 million compared with JD 18,746,000 during the same reporting period. Last year's foreign investment figures represent three per cent of the total investments of JD 730.4 million for the first ten months of 1996 (AI Ra'i).

Jordanian expands business to bigger markets

By Imad Hmoud
 Special to the Jordan Times

CAIRO — Jordanian investor Sabri Farraj starts his day at seven o'clock every morning to follow up details and make important decisions about his four factories in Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Farraj, at 62, reflects the launch of Jordanian investors abroad which fled Jordan's high custom tax and bureaucratic regulations. Such investments today go toward bigger markets with greater purchasing power, like Egypt's 60 million people.

After starting out as an

office boy in the bakery, Mr. Farraj now owns a big investment group which controls four factories producing electrical circuit breakers and power controls.

His first factory in Amman still makes electrical pipes. His second was in Saudi Arabia. His third and fourth are in Sadat City, where a fifth is also under construction.

Mr. Farraj has expanded to real estate investments and commercial properties in partnership with Egyptians.

He tells the story of how he started in business with a small factory in Amman.

Because of lack of incentives in Jordan and high custom taxes, he started his second factory in 1985.

In Egypt, he enjoyed 10 years of free income tax and very small custom taxes.

In an interview, Mr. Farraj urged the Jordanian government to establish incentives to investors, as Egypt does. He also asked the Ministry of Industry to listen carefully to the problems investors face in Jordan before issuing new laws.

Mr. Farraj insists that Jordanian investment in Egypt exceeds \$1 billion, including land, buildings

and equipment.

The statistics of the Egyptian Authority for Investment and Free Zones show that Jordanian investors are involved in 140 projects with investments of LE 261 million, or about 20 per cent of total investments in these projects.

Mr. Farraj has not abandoned Jordan. He is proud that he sends back the return on his investment to the town of his birth, Madaba, 45 kilometres south of Amman. He sends the money for small projects to benefit his tribe, Ajarmeh.

At the end of the interview, he raised this question: "Why don't I have the real chance to invest in my homeland and achieve benefits to all?"



Sabri Farraj
 view, he raised this question: "Why don't I have the real chance to invest in my homeland and achieve benefits to all?"

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates											
	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	MLG	FRF		
US Dollar	1.7485	0.5825	1.4191	125.87	1.4164	1712.50	1.9686	5.8487			
DE Mark	0.5726	1.0000	0.6366	63.66	0.6108	978.68	1.1273	3.3803			
GB Sterling	1.6878	2.9495	1.0000	239.44	212.14	2.3906	2888.49	3.3220	8.8697		
CH Franc	0.7047	123.03	0.4172	88.71	0.9978	1205.58	138.67	4.1200			
JP Yen	0.0079	1.3872	0.4702	1.1270	1.1248	13.60	156.34	4.6452			
CA Dollar	0.7060	1.2327	0.4178	1.0011	1.12	1207.48	1.3865	4.1267			
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0197	0.3457	0.0828	1382.40	0.8289	11.48	3.4148			
NL Guilder	0.8080	88.66	0.3006	72.07	63.89	0.7191	889.47	2.8697			
FR Franc	0.1710	0.2985	0.1012	24.2573	21.50	0.2421	33.65	33.6500			

Middle Eastern Currencies											
	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	MLG	FRF		
US Dollar	0.7085	3.7505	0.3770	3.6403	0.3032	3.6727	1524.00	3.4030			
Jordan Dinar	1.4114	0.2666	0.1889	0.5321	5.1390	0.4279	5.1838	2151.02	4.8031		
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1889	0.1005	0.97	0.0808	0.98	406.35	0.5073			
Bahrain Dinar	2.85	1.8794	0.9488	9.86	0.8043	8.74	4042.65	0.2070			
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1946	1.0303	1.0303	0.0833	1.01	418.65	0.9348			
Kuwait Dinar	3.2982	2.3387	12.9987	12.433	12.01	12.11	5026.38	0.9348			
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0212	1.0208	0.9912	0.9828	414.95	0.9266			
Lebanese Lira	0.0006	0.4649	2.4610	0.2474	2.3888	0.1980	2.4099	2.2328			
Egyptian	0.2939	0.2082	1.1021	0.1108	1.0697	0.0891	1.0793	447.84			

Energy											
	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	MLG	FRF		
Brent	18.88	19.04									
W. Texas	18.58	19.14									
Bonny	18.88	19.04									
Dubai	17.90	17.90									
UL Gas	185.00	187.00									


Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)											
	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	MLG	FRF		
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4658	0.15798	0.37852	33.5739						
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.47967	0.16132	0.38653	34.2653						
KW Dinar	3.2982	5.76937	1.95427	4.68165	415.282						
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.63392	1.57158	3.76508	334.001						
CY Pound	1.9493	3.4053	1.1545	2.7656	245.421						

Main Equity Indices											
	Index	Value	Chg	% Chg	High	Low	P/C				
New York	DOW JONES	7853.43	32.82	0.42	7881.07	7827.85	7828.61				
New York	S&P 500	961.94	2.96	0.31	964.55	958.98	958.98				
London	FT-SE 100	4985.8	77.4	1.58	4985.8	4915.9	4908.4				
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	16721.58	413.09	2.53	16809	16420	16308.5				
Paris	CAC 40	2861.7	40.51	1.44	2876.33	2837.24	2821.19				
Frankfurt	DAX	3993.69	43.75	1.12	3975.38	3955.08	3915.94				

Energy											
	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	MLG	FRF		
Coffee (c/lb)	157.67	Spot									
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1608	Spot									
Sugar (\$/ton)	301.8	Spot									
Wheat (\$/ton)	127	Spot									
Soya (c/lb)	24.83	Spot									
Tea (c/lb)	155	Spot									
Barley (\$/bush)	0	Spot									
Rice (\$/ton)	370	Spot									

JOD Cross Rates											
	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	MLG	FRF		
US Dollar	0.708	0.710									
GB Sterling	1.1948	1.2008									
DE Mark	0.4077	0.4097									
CH Franc	0.503	0.5035									
FR Franc	0.1218	0.1224									
JP Yen	0.5579	0.5607									
NL Guilder	0.362	0.3638									
IT Lira	0.4182	0.4183									

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (19/11/1997 - 19/11/1997)											
WEEKLY REPORT											
											
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS	COMPANY NAME	P/E	DIV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES EXECUTED	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	AVERAGE PRICE
RICH	LOW										
326.000	325.000 AMAN BANK	15.3	1.20	58	6940	3202589	326.00	333.00	324.00	333.00	326.00
1.910	1.740 JOR. NATIONAL BK.	0.00	0.00	62	148347	308038	1.80	1.80	1.79	1.84	1.83
3.350	3.300 BANK OF JORDAN	0.00	0.00	22	18126	46047	3.00	3.20	3.19	3.04	3.04
1.120	1.070 STD. BANK INV. BK.	71.6	0.00	2	400	449	1.10	1.09	1.08	1.09	1.08
2.480	2.900 INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.3	6.00	36	41331	120155	2.44	2.42	2.39	2.40	2.40
5.100	5.000 THE HOUSING BK.	15.2	3.00	33	25401	130488	9.00	9.10	9.05	9.10	9.09
2.450	2.300 JOR. TRADING BANK	10.5	0.00	28	18073	37856	2.20	2.21	2.09	2.09	2.10
1.000	1.000 JOR. TRADING BANK	4.4	0.00	2	2500	1950	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78
5.210	2.550 JOR. TRADING BANK	15.0	3.27	178	74610	283996	3.87	3.84	3.70	3.74	3.70
1.220	1.180 UNION BK. DEV. INV.	144.1	0.00	3	1550	2327	1.10	1.20	1.17	1.17	1.17
3.800	3.800 JOR. INV. FUND. BK.	24.9	0.00	4	20400	77740	3.88	3.89	3.81	3.81	3.81
1.900	1.450 JOR. TRADING BANK	9.6	16.48	13	8080	2799	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48
3.730	3.350 AMAN BANKING CO.	17.1	0.00	1	200	710	3.73	3.73	3.73	3.73	3.73
CHANGE +1.51%											
BANKS SECTOR											
1.950	1.880 JOR. TRADING BANK	9.2	7.54	3	1700	3283	1.85	1.89	1.87	1.89	1.89
2.350	2.150 AMAN LIFE INSUR.	8.8	0.43	1	200	410	2.30	2.05	2.05	2.05	2.05
2.500	2.500 JORDAN AUTO INSUR.	0.00	0.00	17	52866	129581	2.50	2.50	2.37	2.37	2.37
CHANGE +0.42%											
INSURANCE SECTOR											
1.900	1.840 JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	5.2	5.26	132	82594	155042	1.50	1.97	1.89	1.90	1.90
2.550	2.400 SHIPPING LINES	9.21	9.21	1	900	1225	2.40	2.45	2.45	2.45	2.45
1.270	1.140 BAKEL PORTUGAL	0.00	0.00	35	20566	24626	1.15	1.15	1.15	1.18	1.15
1.950	1.900 REAL ESTATE	12.4	0.00	3	11000	10010	1.90	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92
1.250	1.240 MIB. EXAT. HOTELS	15.5	0.00	15	26150	14778	1.20	1.24	1.28	1.28	1.28
3.780	3.630 ARAB INTL. INV. FUND.	9.6	0.00	16	10300	37541	3.68	3.70	3.68	3.68	3.68
1.000	1.000 JORDAN EXPAT. INV.	0.00	0.00	2	400	370	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
1.900	1.900 JORDAN EXPAT. INV.	0.00	0.00	36	15225	10561	1.90	1.90	1.90	1.90	1.90
1.740	1.740 TRUFFED CO.	8.2	0.00	11	3600	12600	1.70	1.71	1.71	1.71	1.71
1.750	1.700 UNION LAMB DEV.	0.00	0.00	8	1875	1345	1.70	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72
CHANGE +0.41%											
SERVICES SECTOR											
3.230	3.050 JOR. CHEMOT. FACT.	20.9	3.54	88	209087	652241	3.12	3.14	3.10	3.11	3.11
3.950	2.500 JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	9.8	2.82	14	14681	57924	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.55	3.55
6.500	6.100 ARAB POTASH CO.	30.9	3.13	9	28083	180073	6.50	6.45	6.40	6.40	6.42
11.000	10.760 JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.6	0.25	29	6579	70578	10.76	10.80	10.78	10.78	10.78
1.190	3.050 WOLAN INDUSTRIES	5.6	9.01	11	2500	3992	1.19	1.29	1.10	1.11	1.11
1.150	1.130 INDUSTRIAL COM. LAM.	12.4	0.00	18	12115	17805	1.15	1.17	1.15	1.15	1.15
4.700	4.500 JOR. HORTIC. MILLS	10.5	3.00	4	3958	20894	4.55	4.55	4.55	4.55	4.55
4.260	4.170 ARAB FRUIT. MFG.	21.5	4.78	43	17425	56548	4.22	4.21	4.17	4.18	4.18
1.280	1.020 JOR. PIPES MANUFCT.	16.7	5.92	84	28972	39577	1.28	1.44	1.30	1.35	1.35
1.420	1.200 BAKIA DOWNSTAIRS	32.6	0.00	11	2200	2834	1.20	1.34	1.20	1.25	1.25
2.190	1.600 DOR. ALUMINA. PV. INV.	12.5	4.55	12	20416	112516	1.60	1.65	1.58	1.58	1.58
2.460	2.350 ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.6	10.42	3	325	780	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40
1.480	1.460 LIVERSTOCK & POULTRY	5.5	8.80	45	38020	18112	1.47	1.48	1.47	1.47	1.47
2.490	3.690 GENERAL INVESTMENT	8.6	3.52	3	360	592	3.69	2.07	1.88	2.07	1.82
1.980	1.900 ARAB PAPER COM. IND.	6.0	0.00	4	650	540	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98
1.980	1.350 NATIONAL INVS.	0.00	0.00	5	17509	9749	1.99	1.96	1.94	1.94	1.94
1.540	1.500 INTERVED. PETRO. CHEM.	0.00	0.00	41	20550	5777	1.50	1.50	1.47	1.49	1.47
1.620	1.590 JOR. ROCKWOLD INDS.	0.00	0.00	3	2250	1328	1.59	1.59	1.59	1.59	1.59
1.460	1.460 ONLY CASH. IND.	32.6	6.94	6	1800	2539	1.41	1.42	1.40	1.42	1.41
2.190	1.600 HITE-CABLE WIRE. INVC.	28.9	0.00	7	1400	2637	1.90	1.90	1.86	1.86	1.86
1.450	1.550 JOR. SULPH. CHEM.	0.00	0.00	55	23700	14350	1.40	1.45	1.41	1.41	1.41
1.310	1.260 AMAN PHARM. CHEN.	16.3	9.47	14	7788	9995	1.27	1.29	1.27	1.28	1.28
1.400	1.400 WATSON TRADING	61.1	0.00	1	200	124	1.40	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42
CHANGE +0.58%											
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR											
3.230	3.050 JOR. CHEMOT. FACT.	20.9	3.54	88	209087	652241	3.12	3.14	3.10	3.11	3.11
3.950	2.500 JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	9.8	2.82	14	14681	57924	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.55	3.55
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11.000	10.760 JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.6	0.25	29	6579	70578	10.76	10.80	10.78	10.78	10.78
1.190	3.050 WOLAN INDUSTRIES	5.6	9.01	11	2500	3992	1.19	1.29	1.10	1.11	1.11
1.150	1.130 INDUSTRIAL COM. LAM.	12.4	0.00	18	12115	17805	1.15	1.17	1.15	1.15	1.15
4.700	4.500 JOR. HORTIC. MILLS	10.5	3.00	4	3958	20894	4.55	4.55	4.55	4.55	4.55
4.260	4.170 ARAB FRUIT. MFG.	21.5	4.78	43	17425	56548	4.22	4.21	4.17	4.18	4.18
1.280	1.020 JOR. PIPES MANUFCT.	16.7	5.92	84	28972	39577	1.28	1.44	1.30	1.35	1.35
1.420	1.200 BAKIA DOWNSTAIRS	32.6	0.00	11	2200	2834	1.20	1.34	1.20	1.25	1.25
2.190	1.600 DOR. ALUMINA. PV. INV.	12.5	4.55	12	20416	112516	1.60	1.65	1.58	1.58	1.58
2.460	2.350 ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.6	10.42	3	325	780	2.30	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40
1.480	1.460 LIVERSTOCK & POULTRY	5.5	8.80	45	38020	18112	1.47	1.48	1.47	1.47	1.47
2.490	3.690 GENERAL INVESTMENT	8.6	3.52	3	360	592	3.69	2.07	1.88	2.07	1.82
1.980	1.900 ARAB PAPER COM. IND.	6.0	0.00	4	650	540	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98
1.980	1.350 NATIONAL INVS.	0.00	0.00	5	17509	9749	1.99	1.96	1.94	1.94	1.94
1.540	1.500 INTERVED. PETRO. CHEM.	0.00	0.00	41	20550	5777	1.50	1.50	1.47	1.49	1.47
1.620	1.590 JOR. ROCKWOLD INDS.	0.00	0.00	3	2250	1328	1.59	1.59	1.59	1.59	1.59
1.460	1.460 ONLY CASH. IND.	32.6	6.94	6	1800	2539	1.41	1.42	1.40	1.42	1.41
2.190	1.600 HITE-CABLE WIRE. INVC.	28.9	0.00	7	1400	2637	1.90	1.90	1.86	1.86	1.86
1.450	1.550 JOR. SULPH. CHEM.	0.00	0.00	55	23700	14350	1.40	1.45	1.41	1.41	1.41
1.310	1.260 AMAN PHARM. CHEN.	16.3	9.47	14	7788	9995	1.27	1.29	1.27	1.28	1.28
1.400	1.400 WATSON TRADING	61.1	0.00	1	200	124	1.40	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42
CHANGE +0.68%											
GRAND TOTAL											
1447	1328793	9279993	INDEX NUMBER	117.07	CHANGE +0.58%						

Pierce topples Hingis in WTA Championships

NEW YORK (AFP) — World No. 1 Martina Hingis' magnificent season came to an abrupt end Thursday when she was stunned by number seven Mary Pierce of France, 6-3, 2-6, 7-5, in the quarter-finals of the WTA Championships.

Pierce gained revenge for her loss to Hingis in the Australian Open final as she handed the Swiss teenager her fifth loss of the season — and just her second before the semi-finals.

In the semi-finals on Saturday Pierce will meet compatriot Nathalie Tauziat, who defeated sixth-seeded Croatian Iva Majoli 7-6 (9/7), 7-6 (7/4). Hingis finished the year 75-5, capturing 12 singles titles, including three Grand Slams. She became the first tennis player to reach the \$3 million mark in earnings in a season.

Pierce, who had been suffering from a kidney infection in recent weeks, fell behind 4-2 in the third set before breaking back and holding to square things at 4-4. She surged ahead in the 11th game, hitting a slicing forehand cross-court volley winner on break point, and served for the match at 6-5.

Pierce gained her first match point with a service winner but hit a backhand long. After fighting off two break points, Pierce sent a backhand long on a second match point.

Two more unforced errors by Pierce gave Hingis another chance to square the set. But the world's top player netted a forehand and Pierce ended a long rally with a cross-court forehand volley winner. She closed out the win on her third match point when Hingis' backhand sailed wide.

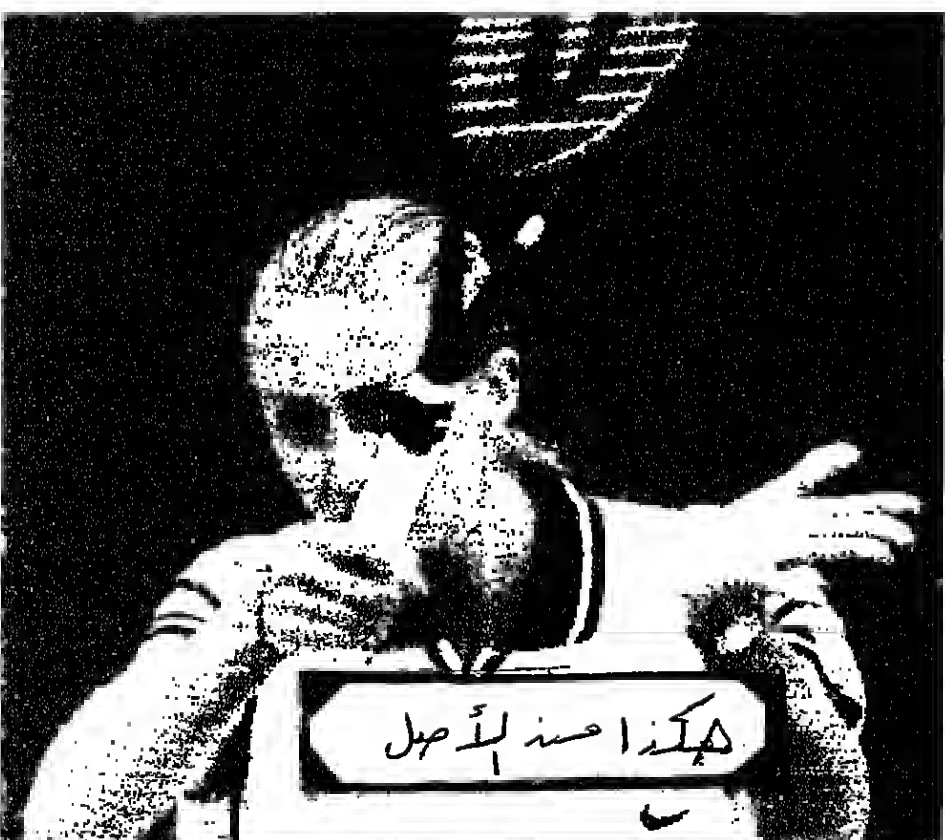
Pierce is appearing in the season-ending event for the fourth time. She missed it last year because of a shoulder injury.

She was in the semi-finals in 1993 and 1994.

The Frenchwoman captured her lone singles title of the season at the Italian Open and was a finalist at the Bausch and Lomb Championships in April and the German Open in May.



Top seed Martina Hingis from Switzerland reacts after she hit a return into the net in the final set of her quarterfinal loss to France's Mary Pierce at New York's Madison Square Garden. Pierce won 6-3 2-6 7-5 (Reuters photo)



Mary Pierce

Ditches could be used at World Cup venues

PARIS (AFP) — Ditches could be used at four World Cup stadiums in place of the perimeter fencing which is normally used during French league matches, it was revealed on Thursday.

Stadiums at Lens, Lyon, Montpellier and St Etienne still have perimeter fencing which is fiercely opposed by football's world governing body FIFA.

However a study sent to the French Interior Ministry and to the head of French police has advocated the use of ditches between the pitch and the stands to deter fans running on to the pitch.

The ditches, which could circle the pitch completely, would be raised to about 1.20m but would not restrict views of matches.

However other stadiums would not be using these ditches.

At Marseille and Bordeaux, there is no

perimeter fencing, at the Stade de France north of Paris, the fences are portable and at the Parc des Princes in Paris, the fences are of a different type. The disadvantage of these ditches is that the first three rows of spectator seats must be removed.

FIFA has demanded the removal of fencing surrounding the pitch since the beginning of the year. However they are not against fencing which divides spectator seating into sections.

According to an official report earlier this year, World Cup matches can go ahead without perimeter fencing, but not French league matches.

Findings stated World Cup fans would be on average easier to manage than supporters of some French club sides.

McRae's world title hopes rest on 'ifs' and 'buts'

LONDON (AFP) — Colin McRae's hopes of winning his second World Championship in the final rally of the season rest on a series of 'ifs' and 'buts'.

If the Scot can win the RAC Rally which starts on Sunday he can repeat his 1995 title — but only if current points leader and arch-rival Tommi Makinen finishes outside the top six.

But win or lose, it will be a dramatic end to the season for McRae.

His title dream looked dead and buried after his fourth successive flop at the Rally of Indonesia, after which Makinen was a commanding 20 points ahead of the Subaru man in the standings with Spaniard Carlos Sainz looking a more potent threat.

But swashbuckling wins in Italy and Australia, in which Makinen was third and second respectively while Sainz's challenge evaporated, have given McRae a lifeline going into the climax of the 14-round series.

It is still a tall order, despite his impressive recent form, for 29-year-old McRae to complete a hat-trick of wins when he sets

out from Cheltenham on Sunday in Britain's biggest annual sporting event — two million spectators are expected.

And the Lanark-born, Monaco-based driver is fully aware of the task he faces over three long days on some of the country's most testing terrain.

"There's two things to it. Firstly, I must win the rally, which a lot of people think will be automatic," said McRae, who will be joined among the 160-car line-up by his father Jimmy and brother Alister.

"But it will be very hard as it's the last event of the season and there will be very few team orders in operation. Maybe there will be between Tommi and his Mitsubishi team-mate Richard Burns, but everyone wants to go out with a bang and win the RAC Rally, which won't be easy anyway."

"Just a couple of events ago it was hard to think we'd be in a position to fight for the championship on the final round. But if there was anywhere I'd rather do it, the RAC Rally is obviously the event that favours me most."

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Romario told to change or go

VALENCIA (AFP) — Romario may be leaving Valencia after the Spanish club's Italian coach Claudio Ranieri said he would not change team tactics to suit the Brazil World Cup star. "I understand Romario but he has to adapt to the team and not the other way round and if he wants to go I can't force him to stay," said Ranieri who took over from Argentine coach Jorge Valdano last month. Valencia are fourth from bottom of the Spanish league.

Marlins continue salary slashing

MIAMI (AFP) — World Series champion Florida continued its payroll slashing binge here Thursday, sending first baseman Jeff Conine to Kansas City rather than pay him \$3 million in 1998. The Marlins had already reduced their payroll by \$18 million by trading outfielders Devon White and Moises Alou plus relief pitcher Robb Nen and three other players with lesser salaries. But in dealing Conine to the Royals for two minor-leaguers, the Marlins made a break with their past, sending off the last starter who had been with the club for its entire five-year history. Outfielder Gary Sheffield and pitcher Kevin Brown are two other Marlins still on the trading block in a fire sale to reduce expenses after owner Wayne Huizenga spent a king's ransom to sign players. The club lost \$34 million in its championship season despite a 34 percent attendance increase and greater losses were set unless salary expenses were cut. The Marlins spent \$53 million in 1997 salaries. The moves are also aimed at easing the transfer to new local owners who want to keep the club in southern Florida. Conine hit .242 with 17 home runs and 61 runs batted in during the season and .214 with three RBI in 15 postseason games. Cliff Floyd will likely take over as the Marlins starting first baseman.

Valderrama jumps to Miami

MIAMI (AFP) — Colombian star Carlos Valderrama. Major League Soccer's assist leader, joined the Miami Fusion from the Tampa Bay Mutiny here Wednesday. Valderrama, 36, has been the Most Valuable Player of both MLS All-Star Games but is best known for his flowing blond hair and status as Colombia World Cup leader for most of the past 13 years. "Although I enjoyed my two years in Tampa, I am excited to be part of this new challenge," Valderrama said. "South Florida has shown tremendous support of the Colombian national team. I look forward to playing there." Miami is an expansion club which will play its first match next season. The club will play in a high school stadium in Fort Lauderdale after a dispute with Miami city officials over stadium revenues. The MLS, which signs all player contracts and allocates talent to its teams, made the move after Tampa Bay signed Swedish goalkeeper Thomas Ravelli, forcing them to offload a top non-U.S. player under league rules.

Irregular heartbeat sidelines Colman

PHILADELPHIA (AFP) — Derrick Coleman, an early season spark for the Philadelphia 76ers, will miss at least two weeks of the National Basketball Association season with an irregular heartbeat. Coleman, who had the same problem earlier in his career, had a checkup in early November and thought he was fine. But he learned the problem was back on Wednesday. "I'm taking precautions to put it back in rhythm," Coleman said. "I took a test about a week ago as a normal follow-up. We're just being cautious." Coleman's official diagnosis is arterial fibrillation. He will undergo further tests and go on blood thinners, which improve circulation but will force him off the court. Coleman said he is not scared but wants to be cautious and not risk his health to play. "My health is more important to me than anything. It's my number one priority," Coleman said. Coleman, 30, was barely over his first bout of heart trouble when the 76ers obtained him from New Jersey in November of 1995. He played only 11 games after the trade, scoring only 11.2 points a game. The often unhappy forward averaged 18.1 points and 10.0 rebounds last season but missed 25 games. Philadelphia tried to trade him and his \$13 million guaranteed salary over the next two years, but had no takers. New 76ers coach Larry Brown has revived Coleman's spirit. Coleman is averaging 14.9 points and 8.9 rebounds a game this season. "It will be a big blow," Brown said. "He's playing so great. The more he gets to play, the better condition he gets in, and the better we can utilize him. That will hurt."

Liverpool abandon U.S. keeper

LONDON (AFP) — Liverpool could give up trying to bring United States international goalkeeper Brad Friedel to Premiership football because his work permit could take months to be granted by British officials. Liverpool manager Roy Evans wants Friedel at Liverpool to put pressure on current keeper David James as quickly as possible, and he may not be prepared to wait until well into the New Year to get the 27-year-old. Friedel has also been linked with a move to Portugal's Benfica, coached by former Liverpool player and manager Graeme Souness, and Glasgow Rangers of Scotland. He previously failed to gain a work permit after Newcastle, Sunderland and Southampton showed an interest in signing him.

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WHERE'S THE 12TH TRICK?

Both vulnerable. North deals.

encouragement to contract for slam.

Declarer can count 11 fast tricks.

One way to establish the 12th is to

draw trumps and hope that clubs

split evenly, in which case South's

fourth club becomes the fulfilling

trick. That, however, is almost two-

to-one against.

It is better to draw just two

rounds of trumps and then try to

cash three rounds of clubs. If the

suit splits, or if the player with

short clubs also has no more than

two trumps, declarer can ruff a club

in dummy. But that, too, is slightly

against the odds — the player who

is short in clubs rates to have the

long trump.

The best line is to find out first if

trumps are breaking 3-2. If so,

declarer can come to 12 tricks with

little or no risk.

Win the first trick in hand and

cash another high trump. If both

defenders follow, abandon trumps

in favor of crossing to the ace of

spades and ruffing a spade in hand.

Now use the ace and queen of clubs

as entries to ruff two more spades,

then get back to dummy with the

king of diamonds to draw the last

trump with the ace. Declarer takes

three trump tricks, the ace of

spades, three spade ruffs, two diamonds

and three clubs — 12 tricks in all.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

told to change or go

(AFP) — Romanio may be leaving Valeriu's club's Italian coach Claudio Ranieri to change team tactics to suit the Brazil World Cup. The coach said he has to understand the other way around and if he wants to stay, he must understand the other way around. Valeriu said he will talk to the coach about the Spanish league.

continue salary slashing

World Series champion Florida Marlins are slashing salaries this season. Marlins manager Jim Lincecum said the team is not going to pay \$18 million a year to the players. The Marlins have already slashed salaries by 10 percent. Marlins manager Jim Lincecum said the team is not going to pay \$18 million a year to the players. The Marlins have already slashed salaries by 10 percent.

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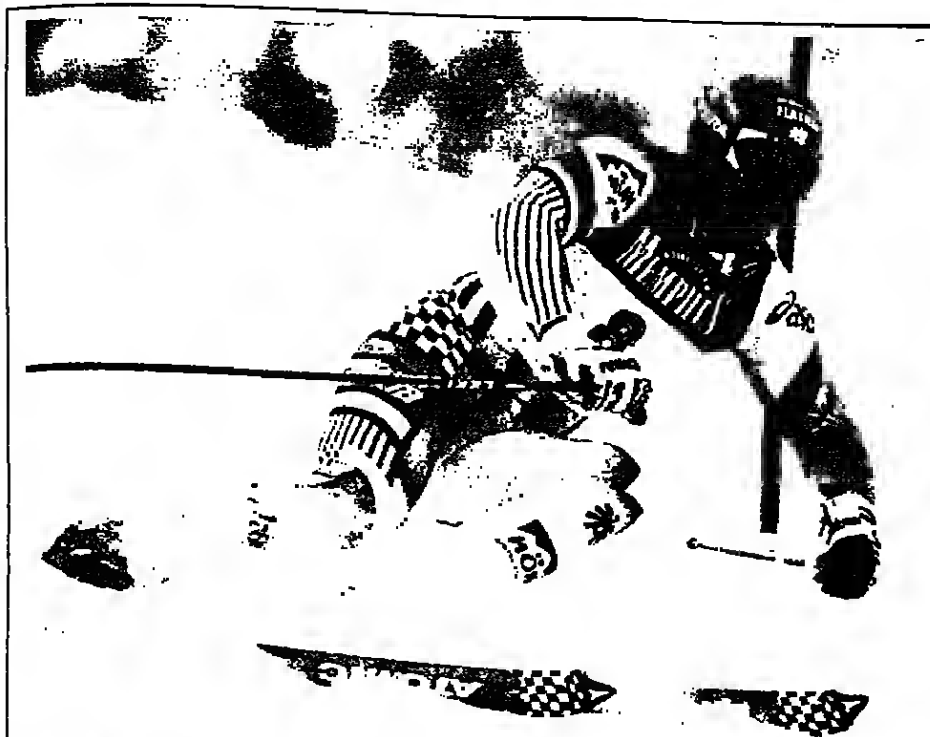
Atlanta's season-opening 11-game winning streak ended Thursday night when the New York Knicks rolled over the injury-depleted Hawks 100-79 behind John Starks' 20 points and another stifling defensive performance. The Hawks shot only 37.3 per cent against the Knicks, who were holding opponents to a league-low 39.3 per cent from the field.

heartbeat sidelines Colman

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Hermann Maier of Austria races past a gate during the second heat in World Cup giant slalom competition in Park City. He took first place in the event with a combined time of 2:43.99 (Reuters photo)

Knicks end Hawks winning streak; Bulls still winless on the road

ATLANTA (AP) — Atlanta's season-opening 11-game winning streak ended Thursday night when the New York Knicks rolled over the injury-depleted Hawks 100-79 behind John Starks' 20 points and another stifling defensive performance.

The Hawks shot only 37.3 per cent against the Knicks, who were holding opponents to a league-low 39.3 per cent from the field. Atlanta's loss left the Los Angeles Lakers (10-0) as the only unbeaten team in the NBA. The Hawks wound up four games short of the NBA record for most victories to begin the season, set by the Washington Capitals in 1948 and matched by the Houston Rockets in 1993.

Patrick Ewing scored 18 points for the Knicks, while Allan Houston and Chris Dudley had 15 apiece. Christian Laettner scored 16 for the Hawks, who played without guard Steve Smith (lower back spasms) and reserve forward Alan Henderson (sprained right ankle).

Trail Blazers 93, Pistons 87: In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Isaiah Rider had 28 points and Kenny Anderson scored nine of his 17 in the final six minutes to help the Portland trail Blazers beat the Detroit Pistons.

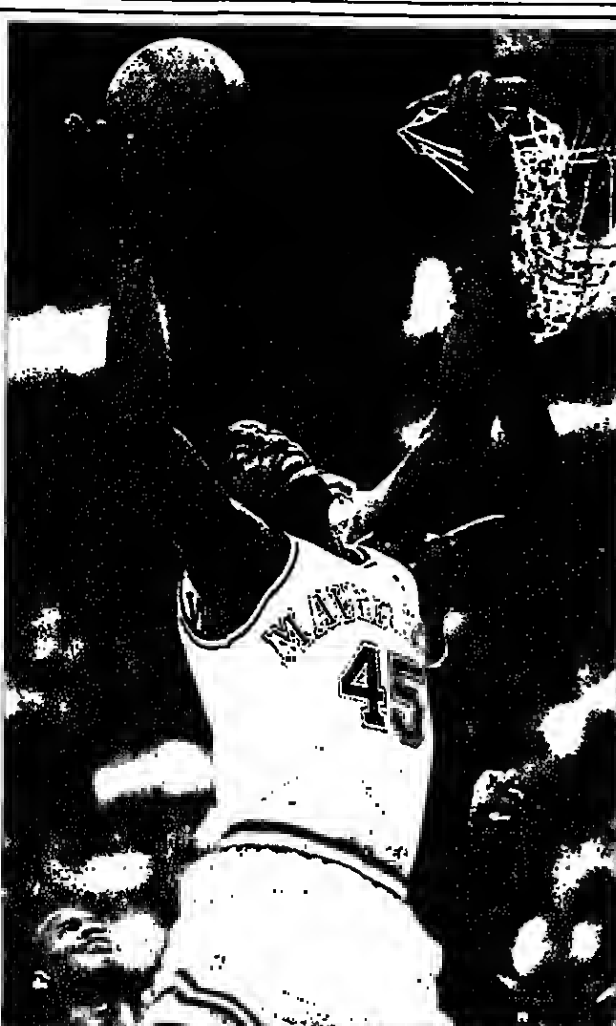
Portland has won eight of 10, while the Pistons have lost eight of 10. The Pistons, who once trailed by 20 points, rallied to take the lead in Brian Williams' three-point play in the fourth quarter. But Anderson's 3-pointer triggered a 13-2 run that gave the Blazers a 87-79 lead with 2:45 left.

Rockets 127, Raptors 97: In Houston, Clyde Drexler had 21 points, eight rebounds and eight assists in three quarters as Houston handed Toronto its franchise-record eighth straight loss.

Mario Elie, Hakeem Olajuwon and Kevin Willis each scored 17 points for Houston, which rested its starters in the fourth period. Guard Damon Stoudamire had 25 points and 11 rebounds — one short of his career high — for the Raptors.

Pacers 109, Bucks 83: In Milwaukee, reserve Travis Best scored 18 points to lead a balanced scoring attack as the Indiana Pacers handed the Milwaukee Bucks their biggest loss of the season.

Chris Mullin and Jalen Rose each had 16 points as the Pacers topped 100 points for the second



Dallas Mavericks A.C. Green jumps for a rebound against the Golden State Warriors during his historic 907th consecutive game. Green became the NBA's new all-time Ironman (Reuters photo)

straight game and held an opponent under 90 for the first straight.

Suns 89, Bulls 85: In Phoenix, Danny Manning scored 23 points, including two free throws with 2.7 seconds remaining, as the Phoenix Suns kept Chicago winless on the road this season.

Michael Jordan scored 30 points but only six came in the fourth quarter. Chicago is 0-4 on the road to start a season for the first time since 1983-84, the year before Jordan joined the team.

Kevin Johnson finished with 16 points — eight in the final 6:36 — as Phoenix beat the defending NBA champions for just the second time in the last five meetings.

Warriors 101, Mavericks 97, OT: In Dallas, A.C. Green's record 907th consecutive game was spoiled when the Golden State Warriors got their first win of the season. The game was stopped following the opening tipoff to recognise green's milestone. With baseball iron man Cal Ripken looking on, Green surpassed Randy Smith's mark of 906 set from 1972-83.

Green finished with seven points as the Mavericks lost their eighth straight. Laurell Sprewell scored 28 points, including the first six of overtime. Joe Smith added 17 points for the Warriors, who had opened 0-9.

Dennis Scott scored 33 points for Dallas and made nine 3-pointers, one short of George McCloud's team record.

Kings 97, Jazz 95: In Sacramento, California, Mitch Richmond scored 22 points as the Sacramento Kings snapped a 14-game losing streak against the Utah Jazz. The Kings, who led from start to finish, beat the Jazz for the first

Graf vows to win back No. 1 spot

BAD NEUENAUER, Germany (AFP) — Steffi Graf, fully recovered from a knee operation, is determined to regain her No. 1 spot.

"I still have ambition and I want to win again. The World No. 1," said the 28-year-old who has not played since June. "Doctors have given me the green light to return. My left knee is healed. The cartilage is healed and the ligaments and tendons are equally OK," added the seven-time Wimbledon winner.

Graf, who held the No. 1 spot for 370 weeks has slipped down to 16th. Her last match was in Paris when she was knocked out of the French Open in the quarter-finals by South African Amanda Coetzer.

Graf, who begins training next week, plans to make her professional return in pre-Australian Open tournament in Queensland next January.

She had first hoped to resume playing at the Masters of Champions event in Frankfurt earlier this month but then tentatively revised the date of her return in next month's exhibition event at Bremerhaven, where she would have played campsite Anke Huber.

But Graf explained she had again had to put back her schedule, meaning she will now miss further German exhibitions in Kiel, Hanover and Magdeburg.

"All these tournaments are just too early for me. I still lack match fitness and I don't want to rush things," explained the former world number one, now 14th in the WTA rankings, although the WTA have said she will regain the third place she held prior to her injury when she returns.

Graf had three screws removed from her troublesome left knee only last Monday and is taking no chances with the WTA Tour event in Brisbane leading up to the Australian Open in Melbourne.

The German star meanwhile signed a new sponsorship deal Thursday with a mineral water producer worth ten million marks (\$5.8 million) over five years.

She already has several other deals on the go, with sports equipment manufacturer Adidas on the verge of renewing an existing deal also paying ten million marks over three years.

Southwest Asian Games Kingdom's team begins competition on sour note

Jordan contests organisers decisions in 2 events

By Aileen Bannayan in Amman and Jordan Sports Media reporters in Tehran

JORDAN STARTED its participation on a sour note in the 1st Southwest Asian Games currently underway in Tehran, Iran, with 12 countries competing in 17 sports.

Jordan lost 2-0 to Iran in the team tennis event on Friday. The Kingdom's team had also lost 2-0 to Tajikistan on the opening day of the competition Thursday.

However, the unusual thing about the tennis participation may not be the results, but the makeup of the team.

With Jordan's current top tennis players, Faris and Laith Azzouni unable to join the team for personal reasons, relative newcomer Ahmad Al Hadeed was the only player left.

As the team event required two players at the least, team manager Mazen Hattamleh was registered as player but took a heavy beating from Tajikistan's and Iran's players 6-0, 6-0 in both matches.

Hadeed also lost his matches 6-4, 6-4 to Tajikistan and 6-1, 6-2 to Iran. Jordan did not take part in the doubles event.

In wrestling, Pan-Arab Games medalist Abdul Hakim Abu Seneib lost 14-2 to Kyrgyzstan. Jordan also lost all singles matches in the badminton event.

Meanwhile, Jordan's head of delegation Mudar Majdoub was in talks with organisers who were adamant on cancelling events for which only a few athletes had showed up apparently because of the late contacts with the competing countries.

The basketball event was cancelled with only the Tajik team present and the organisers brought in three Iranian teams to hold a semi-official tournament on the sidelines of the Games.

The organisers are also likely to cancel the marathon in which Jordan's Salameh Abdul Karim was to take part.

Majdoub said he was trying to convince organisers not to drop the event. In case that happened, Majdoub said Abdul Karim will take part in the 10,000 metres or 10,000 metres walk.

However, Abdul Karim told reporters that he had trained specifically for the marathon in which he thought he stood a good chance for a medal.

"I'm not technically ready for the 10,000 walk," he added.

On the other hand, officials of the boxing team which includes five medal winners at the Pan-Arab Games, said they would raise the issue of not applying international regulations in the event.

Head coach Haitham Amer expressed his surprise at the boxing bouts having three rounds when the international regulations stipulate that there should be five.

"Our athletes have practised to have five two-minute rounds. That's the way it should be in competition as well. We will also raise the issue that computers should be used by referees to rule out bias."

In athletics, Arab Games gold medalist Fakrudin Fuad was due to arrive in Tehran Saturday morning after he was given the go-ahead by physicians treating his recent spinal injury.

Open to men's teams only, the Nov. 19-28 event has brought together athletes from Saudi Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Oman, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Yemen, Jordan and Iran.

Jordan's 37-member delegation comprises 19 athletes competing in 8 events: Athletics, boxing, fencing, badminton, tennis, wrestling, weightlifting and judo.

The games also include basketball, karate, table tennis, soccer, handball, taekwondo shooting and swimming.

are included in the delegation including Fakrudin Fuad and Tareq Najjar (athletics), Mousa Khalaf (judo), Mohammad Abu Khadijeh, Ayman Nadi, Kamal Abdul Hamid, Khalidoun Abdul Hamid and Basel Hindawi (boxing), Abdul Hakim Abu Seneib and Ismail Sheikh (wrestling), Ayed Khawaldeh (weightlifting), and Amer Natour (fencing).

Only three of the eight federations participating in the Tehran Games were impressive in Beirut.

The boxing, athletics and weightlifting teams earned five medals each while the wrestlers took four. Judo and fencing earned a medal each.

Others like badminton and tennis who have already been eliminated from competition, were not seriously tested in competition recently and their competitive form was unknown.

On the other hand, some of the declining federations had impressive results at the Pan-Arab Games like table tennis took two bronze medals in both the doubles and the team event.

While basketball failed to earn a medal, Jordan has regrouped a new line-up of young stars who finished 6th in Lebanon and 7th in the recently-concluded Asian Championship. Jordan was Arab Champion in the 1985 Pan-Arab Games.

Also missing the event are the handball and equestrian teams as well as Jordan's soccer team who won the gold medal at the Pan-Arab Games.

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Arafat appeals for Indian investments in Palestine

'It costs around \$10 million every day'

NEW DELHI (AFP) — President Yasser Arafat Friday said his people were bearing the brunt of the deadlocked Middle East peace process and appealed for Indian investment in his fledgling nation.

Mr. Arafat told a leading Indian trade forum he had inherited a shattered nation with infrastructure, hospitals, telecoms, schools and roads being destroyed during Israeli occupation.

He said Palestine was starting from "zero" and added: "You can imagine what it means."

"Palestine is paying a heavy price due to the closure and siege by Israel both politically and economically and it costs

around \$10 million every day for the republic."

"Our people are asking why Palestinians alone have to suffer the price for peace," he said.

The Palestinian leader said an agreement on scientific and industrial cooperation signed on Thursday was a "new beginning" and appealed for greater trade ties and more Indian investment.

President Arafat said the stalled Middle East peace process was due to Israel's refusal to "honestly and accurately" implement an accord signed between him and former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Washington. "I am sorry to say everything is frozen," he said and criticised the U.S. Congress

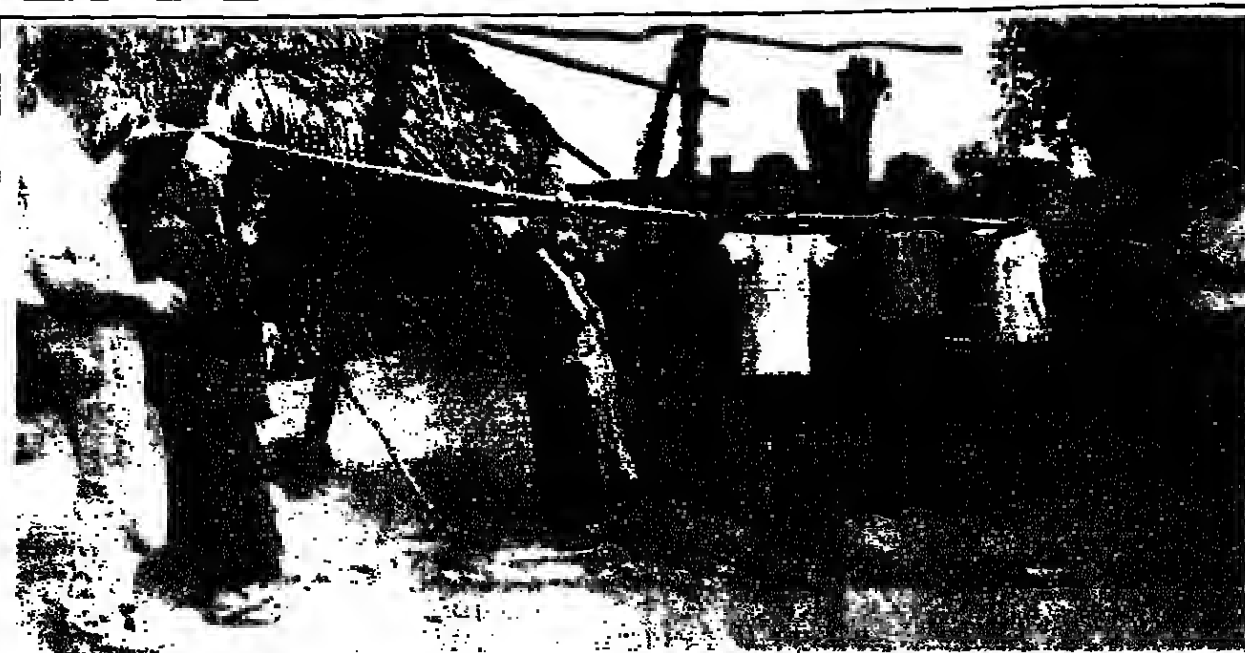
for blocking donations to Palestine.

"I don't know why. I don't understand why only Palestinians have to pay the price," he said.

Mr. Arafat, who flew in late on Wednesday to drum up support over the stalled peace talks, has met Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral and Defence Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav.

India has long been a staunch advocate of Palestine Liberation Organisation. New Delhi recognised the state of Palestine in November 1988, before establishing diplomatic ties with Israel in 1992.

President Arafat will visit the southern city of Hyderabad on Saturday.



NEW 'LONGEST HAIR' RECORD: 85-year-old hill tribesman Hn Saelao, second from left, has his 5.15-metre-long hair measured in Chiang Mai Province, 580 kilometres north of Bangkok Friday. He broke the Guinness Book record of the 4.16 metres set earlier this year by a woman from India (AP photo)

CIA sends back 1,500 agents to Iraq

LONDON (AFP) — The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has re-established itself in the north of Iraq, with more than 1,500 informers returning to their villages, according to a report Thursday.

The Foreign Report, released by the military and strategic affairs publisher Jane's, claimed its sources had said that since summer 1996 their informers had

found no resistance to their presence in northern Iraq.

Between the end of the Gulf war in 1992 and the summer of 1996, the CIA had worked hard to turn Kurdish northern Iraq against Saddam Hussein's regime, the report said.

But these efforts fell apart when Iraqi forces conquered Erbil, the main Kurdish capital in the region, said Jane's. Foreign Report said CIA

infiltrators began returning in May 1997 under the cover of a Turkish attack in northern Iraq on units of the main Turkish-Kurd guerrilla group, the Kurdish Labour Party.

After finding no response by President Saddam to the Turkish attack, the CIA decided to re-establish its informant base, said the report.

Foreign Report also said the Americans had also sent their

own operatives to build monitoring stations to eavesdrop on army, air force and Republican Guard communications across northern Iraq and as far as Baghdad.

The report said such a move had sparked speculation that the U.S. was preparing for the possibility of launching a ground attack as well as a missile offensive from its forces stationed in the Gulf, should it see fit.

Majority of Israelis would like to see changes in government

TEL AVIV (AP) — A large majority of Israelis would like to see new elections or changes in Benjamin Netanyahu's government, but believes the beleaguered prime minister will survive his latest political crisis, according to a survey published Friday.

Mr. Netanyahu has been trying to put down a mutiny in his Likud Party provoked by last week's party convention where Mr. Netanyahu's colleagues pushed through a plan to abolish primaries — giving the power to pick Knesset candidates to a central committee stacked with Netanyahu loyalists.

Senior Likud officials feared they would be shunted aside as Mr. Netanyahu moves to sideline possible challengers, and several of them called for his ouster this week.

In Friday's survey, conducted by Gallup and published in the Maariv daily, only 20 per cent of respondents said the Netanyahu government should complete its term as is. Forty-four per cent said they favoured early elections and 34 per cent said Mr. Netanyahu should bring the opposition Labour Party into his ruling coalition.

The next elections are scheduled for 2000.

Sixty per cent said they don't want Mr. Netanyahu to run as the ruling Likud Party's candidate for prime minister in the next elections, while 31 per cent said he should be the contender again.

Asked about Mr. Netanyahu's chances for political survival, 68 per cent said they expected he would remain in office for the time being, while 22 per cent said they believed the prime minister would be toppled.

The survey was conducted among 484 Israelis and had a margin of error of 4.5 per cent.

Egypt arrests 45 Islamists after identifying a Luxor attacker

ASSIUT (AFP) — Egyptian police said Tuesday they had arrested 45 Islamists after the tourist massacre as they identified the first of the attackers who gunned down 62 people in Luxor this week.

The suspected members of the Jamaa Islamiyah were arrested in sweeps of the town of Badari and nearby villages in the southern province of Assiut during the days after Monday's carnage in Luxor, police sources said.

Security forces were continuing searches in the cave-filled mountains on the eastern bank of the Nile River in search of hidden Jamaa members, the police sources said.

The arrests come as the government prepares to implement over the next 24 hours a new security plan to protect tourists after security lapses were blamed for allowing the devastating attack against one of Egypt's top tourist sites.

Badari, 400 kilometres south of Cairo, is the home of Medhat Abdul Rahman, whom police identified Friday as a member of the six-man Jamaa commando, all of whom were slain by police in gun battles after the attack.

Police said Abdul Rahman, who had returned to Egypt recently from Sudan and Pakistan, had met with other members of the commando in caves near Badari before the attack, which killed 58 tourists, two Egyptians and two policemen.

Interior Minister Habib Adeli called Abdul Rahman "one of the most dangerous terrorists," saying he had been wanted for involvement in 12 attacks against police in Assiut in 1992 and 1993.

Mr. Adeli, quoted by the daily Al-Ahram on Friday, said police had discovered "more important information" about the attackers, but did not elaborate.

The Jamaa, Egypt's main Islamist group which has waged a violent anti-government campaign since 1992, offered on Thursday to stop its attacks if the government releases Islamists held in its prisons.

The government has not responded officially to the Jamaa offer, which repeated a similar offer by the group last summer.

President Hosni Mubarak and his officials have refrained from firebrand speeches against Islamists which were common from former Interior Minister Hassan Alfi, who often vowed to "wipe out" militant groups with an iron fist.

Mr. Alfi was forced to resign Tuesday and was replaced by Mr. Adeli after President Mubarak blamed him for security lapses.

But the head of Al-Ahram, Sheikh Mohammad Tantawi, the top Sunni authority, lashed out at the Islamists in a prayer sermon Friday in the main mosque of Luxor.

"They are traitors to God, to the Prophet, to every religion

and morality. Any orders they received, they received from Satan himself," he said.

"And anyone who protects them, who gives them any aid or does not expose them is a criminal like them and deserves the same punishment they will receive."

Information Minister Safwat Sherif, speaking after President Mubarak met with his cabinet and security chiefs Thursday, vowed that the government would "gather all our efforts on all levels to confront terrorism."

Meanwhile in Cairo, the families of 10 Japanese tourists killed in the attack prepared to return home later Friday with the bodies of their loved ones and others injured in the attack.

The families held a Buddhist prayer service in Cairo's Maadi military hospital in the morning to commemorate the dead, most of whom were newly-wed couples killed on their honeymoon in Egypt.

The bodies of 35 Swiss, four Germans, two Colombians, a French woman and a Bulgarian have already returned home over the past 36 hours.

They were all killed when the Jamaa commando opened fire with automatic weapons on a crowd of tourists in front of the temple of Hatshepsut, a major archaeological site in Luxor, but butchered many of the injured and dying with knives.

Iranian embassy slams U.S. official over terrorism remarks

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) — The Iranian embassy here Friday slammed a U.S. official for remarks maintaining that Tehran supported terrorism.

"The embassy regrets Ramsay's irresponsible and biased remarks regarding terrorism," the embassy said in a statement, referring to Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Energy, Sanctions and Commodities William Ramsay.

"In fact, the Islamic Republic of Iran is itself a victim of terrorism and so far has lost quite a number of its citizens including a president, a premier, some MPs and dignitaries as result of certain terrorist atrocities supported by Washington government," it added.

Mr. Ramsay arrived here Wednesday and left Thursday after meeting Malaysian Foreign Ministry officials to discuss the involvement of state-owned oil company Petronas in a \$2 billion Iranian gas venture with French and Russian companies.

He had said the U.S. 1996 Iran-Libya sanctions act "focused on Iran and its misbehaviour and Iran's support for terrorism and its effort to accumulate weapons of mass destruction."

The Iranian embassy said the "peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities has been endorsed repeatedly by the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency during his numerous visits from Iran."

It said the U.S. "has resorted to such unfounded allegations in order to divert the world attention from U.S. interference in domestic affairs of other nations, including Malaysia and Iran."

"In today's multipolar world, all the independent countries decide for themselves and regulate their future economies as well as trade cooperation with the rest of the world without being influenced by the U.S. coercive measures," the embassy added.

60 killed in Iraqi Kurd fighting in northern Iraq

ANKARA (AFP) — Nearly 60 people were killed in the last few days of fighting between two rival Iraqi Kurdish factions in northern Iraq in which Turkish troops participated, the two groups reported Friday.

In a related development, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) denounced the United States over its alleged "silent support" for a Turkish military campaign which it said had been targeting PUK positions in northern Iraq.

PUK fighters have killed 30 members of the rival Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in clashes east of Rawanduz near the Iranian border since Wednesday, the PUK Radio said in a broadcast from northern Iraq, according to Turkey's Anatolian news agency.

KDP Radio, also broadcasting from northern Iraq, said 30 PUK fighters had been killed. Radio stations of neither group provided information on their own losses.

The PUK's Ankara representative, Shazad Saih, said: "U.S. policies have completely failed in Iraqi Kurdistan. Last year, they stayed silent in the face of an Iraqi invasion and this year they are merely watching a Turkish one."

"We think there is some

kind of U.S. support for the Turkish army, which is practically fighting our forces" in northern Iraq, Mr. Saih told AFP.

In two rounds of counter-offensives against the PUK this month, the KDP, backed by Turkish forces, recovered the areas it lost in a PUK offensive in mid-October.

"Washington has made no official statement on the fighting in northern Iraq this month."

The renewed Iraqi-Kurdish clashes follow a fragile one-year ceasefire in northern Iraq.

The PUK has been charging that Turkish warplanes have pounded its positions, sometimes using incendiary bombs, since mid-October. In the recent KDP counter-offensives, the PUK also accused Turkish tanks of taking part in the fighting.

"In the latest clashes the Turkish army spearheaded the offensive and the KDP backed it. Part of Iraqi Kurdistan is practically under Turkish invasion," Mr. Saih said. "And the United States is merely watching this despite our pleas."

Turkey says its forces are allied with the KDP only in fighting against separatist Turkish Kurds also operating in the area, and denies that it targets the PUK itself.

But U.N. officials in the region and Western sources confirm the Turkish army's involvement against the PUK.

Mr. Saih said, "only the day before and yesterday, Turkish tanks and the KDP attacked our positions east of Rawanduz [near the Iranian border] on our side of the so-called ceasefire line, but this was repulsed."

One KDP official here, however, said: "We successfully pushed the PUK back to last year's ceasefire line at the weekend, and we have no intention to go any further." He said the region has been calmer this week.

November clashes mark the first ground confrontation between Turkish troops and the PUK.

Massoud Barzani's KDP and Jalal Talabani's PUK have controlled northern Iraq in defiance of Baghdad since the 1991 Gulf war, but their partnership collapsed in 1994 due to rifts over power-sharing and revenue. More than 3,000 people have died in clashes since then.

In last year's fighting, the KDP, backed by Baghdad forces, captured the main Iraqi-Kurdish city of Erbil before the U.S. forced both sides to agree to a truce.

Iraq remained neutral in this year's KDP-PUK conflict.

Deaths from illness rising in flooded Somalia — agencies

NAIROBI (AFP) — Deaths from illness are rising in flooded southern Somalia, where the confirmed death toll since the Juba River burst its banks more than a month ago rose by 66 to stand at 1,343 on Friday.

Relief trucks are getting stuck in the mud as unscrupulous boatmen charge up to \$70 a head to rescue people marooned by the floods, the worst in living memory.

The death toll was reported by inter-agency spokeswoman Lynn Geldof.

Various agencies reported malaria, respiratory infections and bloody diarrhoea sweeping through the region, where close to 230,000 people have fled submerged villages.

Two cases of cholera were confirmed in the hospital in the Indian Ocean port city of Kismayo.

Ms. Geldof said Somali elders in Nairobi who viewed video clips of the flooding had promised to cooperate

with the relief agencies, and threatened to amputate the boatmen's hands under Islam's Sharia law.

Four helicopters hired from South Africa were meant to have started arriving in Nairobi Thursday, but were delayed by red tape.

They are now expected to arrive at the weekend, Ms. Geldof said.

With many trucks stuck, and many of the airstrips waterlogged, relief is getting through in dribs and drabs aboard small boats.

The U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) said one of its convoys from Mogadishu had been forced to turn back 17 kilometres from Jilib, on the lower Juba, and the International Committee of the Red Cross said one of its convoys was stuck in the same area.

CARE International estimated that 80 per cent of the region around Jilib was under water, and said the water level was rising around

Bardera, on the middle Juba, where rain was continuing to fall.

Two WFP workers were meanwhile making a three-day trip down the Juba from Bardera to Buale in two fibreglass dinghies, and a WFP team was being flown into nearby Jemame with two inflatable rubber boats.

"Both teams will focus initially on locating and moving stranded populations to safer areas," the WFP said in a statement.

"The teams will also be carrying with them small amounts of supplies such as medicine, shelter materials, and food, which they will hand out to people who cannot be immediately rescued."

The floods, which are also hitting Ethiopia and Kenya, follow a drought last year.

They have devastated agriculture around the Juba and Shabelle rivers in Somalia — the country's breadbasket — and destroyed grain stocks buried in pits.

UFOs catch attention of Chile's air force

SANTIAGO (AFP) — The Chilean air force for the first time is giving in to curiosity and will investigate a slew of UFO sightings, sources said Tuesday. In May, Santiago hosted a convention of UFO researchers from Argentina, Brazil and the U.S. They heard stories such as that of a group of friends who videotaped what they said was a UFO following their car in Chile's desert north. A popular Chilean singer and poet, Tito Fernandez, even claims he was abducted by a UFO in 1974. But air force investigators are sticking to reported in-the-air phenomena. No earthly abductions, please.

Schoolboy, 16, runs off to the Caribbean on exam 'stress break'

LONDON (AFP) — A schoolboy at an exclusive \$21,100-a-year British school has taken an unscheduled trip to Barbados to recover from "exam stress," police said Thursday. Fenn Chapman, 16, was given the money for the \$300 air fare by friends at Rugby School, in central England, which gave its name to the sport of rugby after its invention there. Interpol were alerted after Chapman disappeared Tuesday to board a plane for Barbados, where he spent a recent holiday. But on Thursday police said the boy had now contacted his parents and was planning to return home.

Bardot terms Gaudier 'a boorish lout' in fur bolero row

PARIS (AFP) — Film star turned animal rights campaigner Brigitte Bardot had no better description of cult designer Jean-Paul Gaudier than as being "a boorish lout" who dresses women "to look like scarecrows." In an open letter to the maverick one-time enfant terrible of French fashion, Bardot vented her rage after he sent a model out on the couture catwalks last July sporting a red fox bolero. Gaudier's response could not have been briefer or more to the point. The July collection, the fashion house begged to correct Bardot, contained not just one but two fur boleros, one in red fox, the other silver fox.

New Bond girl prefers to be 'Bond, James Bond'

NEW YORK (AP) — Pretty and petite, the latest Bond girl is also a heavy hitter. Hong Kong action-film veteran Michelle Yeoh teams up with Pierce Brosnan in the upcoming "Tomorrow Never Dies." "I kick and punch quite hard, and it surprises people," Yeoh says in the Nov. 21 Entertainment Weekly. "People don't expect such things coming from little old me." The 35-year-old actress who's trained in the martial arts plays a Chinese secret agent who fights side by side with the British superspy. "When you think of the Bond girls, you think of these bimboes yelling, 'help, James, save me, save me,'" Yeoh says. "I could never relate to them. I always thought of myself as James Bond."

Mobile zoo detained at Austrian airport

VIENNA (AFP) — Austrian customs officials arrested a man trying to smuggle 469 snakes, spiders, frogs and monkeys into the country. The 51-year-old man, secreted among other animals, 189 sapajous (capuchin monkeys), 34 spiders, 14 boa constrictors and 12 tree frogs in three suitcases and his clothing, according to press reports to appear Friday.